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A Neo-Pagan Editor in Late Byzantine Sparta

Or, How Gemistos Pletho Rewrote His Herodotus

ANTHONY ELLIS

Soon after his death, Georgios Gemistos Pletho (ca. 1360–1452/54) became a highly contested figure.¹ Probably the most respected philosopher of his day, he advised successive rulers of the Byzantine Empire and, in the next generation, his pupils went on to become leading scholars and churchmen in Catholic Italy and Orthodox Greece. At the same time, Pletho developed a Neoplatonic theology, elaborated in his book of *Laws*, which was found, declared anathema, and burned after his death. All this is long known. But other riddles surrounding Pletho's life are only now coming to light.

Over the last decade and a half, scholars have discovered that Pletho did strange things with his books. In 2009, Fabio Pagani discussed a series of theological bowdlerizations in Pletho's manuscripts of the ancient philosopher Plato.² Soon after, Filippomaria

Pontani published a short text in which Pletho seems to refer to a manuscript of Homer's *Iliad* that he had "corrected" by removing its most problematic myths. Pontani suggested that this brief note was intended as an appendix to an edited version of Homer, although no corresponding manuscript has yet come to light.³ In 2016, Fabio Acerbi, Stefano Martinelli Tempesta, and Bernard Vitrac showed how Pletho replaced a bifolium in the text of Euclid's *Elements* and used the new folia to modify the structure of the argument to reflect his own position on a long-standing debate on Euclidean

1 The sigla used throughout the article are listed at the start of the Appendix. Shelfmarks of other manuscripts are abbreviated as follows: Ambros. (= Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana), Conv. soppr. (= Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Conventi Soppressi), Marc. gr. (= Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z.), Monac. gr. (= Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. graec.), Plut. gr. (= Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. gr.), Par. gr. (= Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. grec), and Vat. gr. (= Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr.).

2 See F. Pagani, "Damnata verba: Censure di Pletone in alcuni codici platonici," *BZ* 102.1 (2009): 167–202. Pletho's work on the text of Plato is also examined in C. Brockmann, *Die handschriftliche Überlieferung von Platons Symposion* (Wiesbaden, 1992), 126–27 (as well as 130–34); S. Martinelli Tempesta, "Nuove ricerche su Giorgio Gemisto

Pletone e il codice platonico Laur. 80.19," *Studi medievali umanistici* 2 (2004), 309–26; S. Martinelli Tempesta, "Giorgio Gemisto Pletone e il testo di Platone: Un nuovo testimone della ricensione pletoniana alla *Repubblica* e al *Timeo*: Il codice *Laurentianus Pluteus* 80, 19 (β)," in *I Decembrio e la tradizione della Repubblica di Platone tra Medioevo e Umanesimo*, ed. M. Vegetti and P. Pissavino (Naples, 2005), 127–44; F. Pagani, "Un nuovo testimone della recensio pletoniana al testo di Platone: Il Marc. Gr. 188 (K)," *Res publica litterarum* 29 (2006): 5–20; and F. Pagani, "Filosofia e teologia in Giorgio Gemisto Pletone: La testimonianza dei codici platonici," *Rinascimento* 48.3 (2009): 3–45.

3 F. Pontani, "L'Homère de Pléthon," *Scriptorium* 68.1 (2014): 25–47. The final section of the text (C) opens as follows: "At the end, he says this: Even if this *Iliad* of Homer has been corrected by us by the deletion of its most absurd myths . . ." (λέγει δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ ταύτῃ: εἰ καὶ διώρθωται ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἡ Ὀμήρου αὐτῇ Ἰλιάς τῶν γε ἀτοπωτάτων μύθων ἐξαιρέσει . . .). For the question of the origins of this text (a lecture in Mistra written down by a student or a written appendix to an edition?), see the contrasting opinions given in V. A. Carabă, *Pletho Apostata: Die Ablehnung des Christentums durch Georgios Gemistos Pletho (ca. 1355–1452) und dessen Konversion zur griechischen Religion* (Giessen, 2010), 58, and Pontani, "L'Homère," 38.

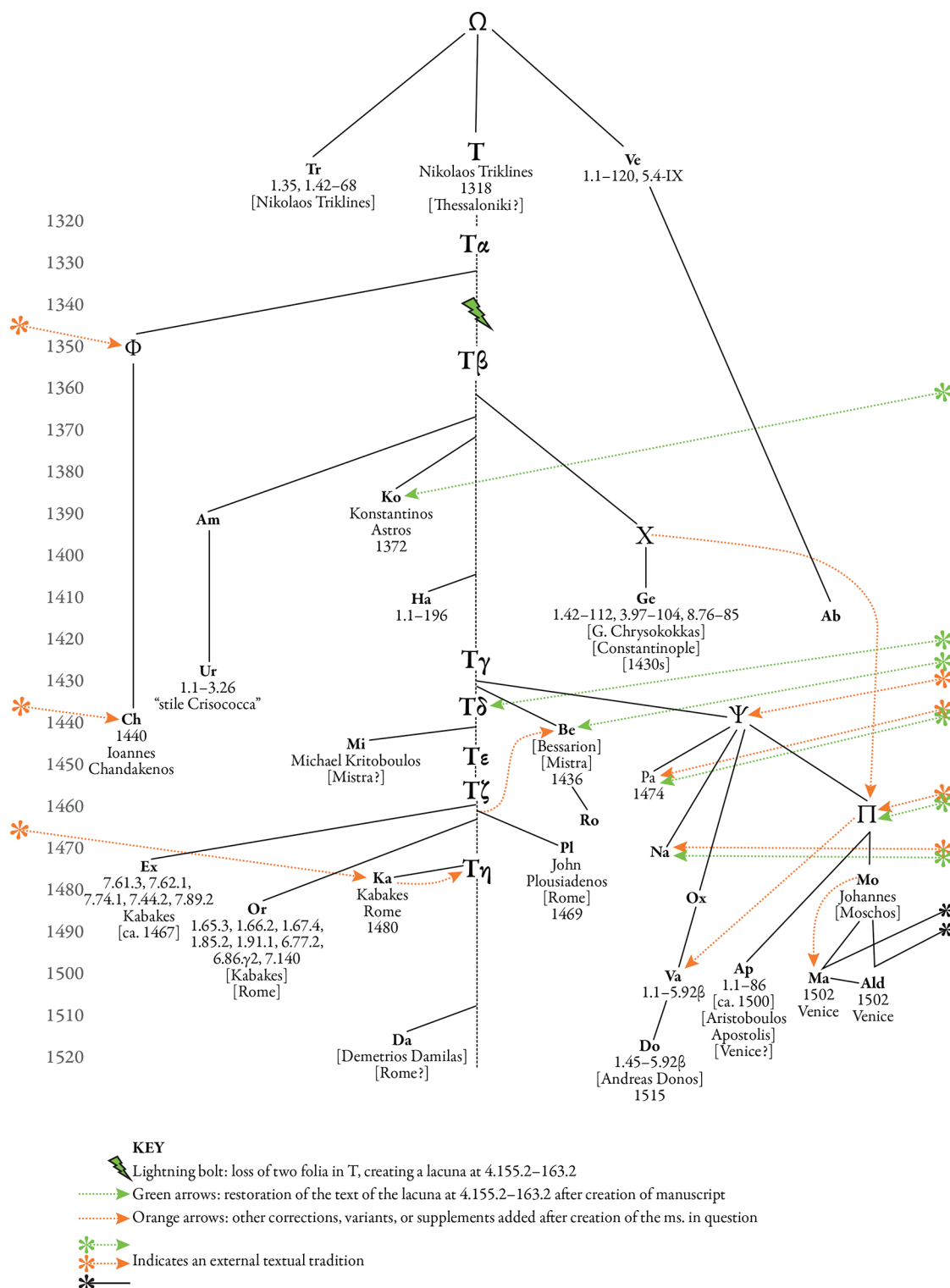


Fig. 1 Stemma of T (Laur. Plut. Gr. 70.6) and its copies. For T in the context of the broader Roman family, see the stemma drawn by Cantore, *famiglia Romana*, 63, 177. This stemma is based on examination of collated passages and specific readings from books 1, 2, and 4 and may not represent the relationships in other books. For further discussion, see Ellis, “*Recentiores*.”

principles.⁴ In this article, I look at what Pletho did to another classic of Greek antiquity: Herodotus's *Histories*. By taking a new approach to Pletho's own manuscript of Herodotus—Plut. gr. 70.6 (hereafter T)—and the many copies made from it, I reconstruct Pletho's editorial work on Herodotus over many years and offer a new glimpse of his idiosyncratic and occasionally brilliant literary workshop.

The raw data, published in the Appendix and summarized in the stemma (Fig. 1), show how Pletho edited Herodotus's account of ancient Greek history in the decades during which the Ottomans conquered the Byzantine Empire. It reveals some surprising interventions, from censorious deletion to skilled rewriting that appropriates Herodotus's dialect and voice. In at least two cases, Pletho remodels the historical record to fit the revisionist history of religion outlined in his *Laws*. But these changes were just part of a broader editing program executed by one of the more talented philologists of the Late Byzantine world. Pletho emerges as an unusually sensitive reader, able to sniff out textual problems that most readers never noticed. His critical attitude also seems to have conjured up spectral problems—and bold solutions—of his own creation. Pletho, I suggest, was hyper-conscious of the danger of corruption, and his editing policy vacillated between idiosyncratic tampering, conspiratorial interventions, and conjectural emendations that have in some cases slipped past modern editors to become the standard text of Herodotus's *Histories* today.

While Pletho's editorial interventions can be traced, the intentions and principles behind them left no paper trail. When he set about subtly rewriting or deleting a passage in an ancient text, did he think of himself as forger, corrector, or censor? When did he develop his neo-pagan vision of religious history, and when did he begin adjusting the evidence in his manuscripts to match? Were these changes undertaken in

collaboration with his illustrious students or carried out secretly to bolster his controversial theories? Pletho's copy of Herodotus and its path through Late Byzantine Mistra and Renaissance Italy provide a rare opportunity to reconsider these questions not only by observing the scholar at work but also by exploring how his editorial work was handled in the next generation, during the battle over his reputation that raged after his death.

Pletho and Neo-Paganism in Mistra

In the latter stages of his life, Georgios Gemistos—better known by his Platonic-sounding nickname “Pletho”—lived in the city of Mistra, near the site of ancient Sparta, in the semi-independent Despotate of Mistra. Here, in “the second capital city of the dying empire,”⁵ Pletho was close to the ruling Palaiologan family and held in deep respect by many of his contemporaries.⁶ He was consulted by Emperor John VIII on the prospect of union between the Catholic and Orthodox churches in the late 1420s and was one of the small number of non-clerical advisors selected to sail to the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438–1439; he delivered funeral orations on the death of members of the imperial family; and he advised the last emperors on how to shore up the crumbling Byzantine states in the face of military threats from Frankish, Italian, and Ottoman rivals. In addition to his unofficial role as advisor, Pletho held public posts in Mistra, as judge and senator, and was repeatedly honored with generous grants of land.⁷

5 The phrase is from C. Woodhouse, *George Gemistos Plethon: The Last of the Hellenes* (Oxford, 1986), 83.

6 For reverence of Pletho's memory after his death, note the epitaphs and comments by Bessarion and Sigismondo Malatesta (collected in J. Irmscher, “Die Epitaphie auf Georgios Gemistos Plethon,” *JÖB* 44 [1994]: 187–91); Demetrios Kabakes (see F. Bacchelli, “Di Demetrio Raoul Kavakis e di alcuni suoi scritti [con due lettere inedite di Gemisto Pletone],” *Unomolti* 1 [2007]: 129–87, and esp. F. Bacchelli, “La *Considération céleste* et les *Enseignements* de Démétrius Rhaoul Kavakis [avec deux lettres inédites de Gemistos Plethon],” *Noctua* 3.2 [2016]: 164–238, at 198–206); and Marsilio Ficino (see below). For broader biographical accounts, see F. Masai, *Pléthon et le platonisme de Mistra* (Paris, 1956); Woodhouse, *Plethon*; and further references below. For the place of Mistra in the Late Byzantine world, see D. A. Zakythinos, *Le despotat grec de Morée*, 2nd ed., rev. C. Maltézou, 2 vols. (London, 1975).

7 For Pletho's public offices and imperial bulls granting him land in 1427, 1428, 1433, 1449, and 1450, see Woodhouse, *Plethon*, 87–88.

4 On Marc. gr. Z. 301 (coll. 635), see F. Acerbi, S. Martinelli Tempesta, and B. Vitrac, “Gli interventi autografi di Giorgio Gemisto Pletone nel codice matematico Marc. gr. Z. 301,” *Segno e Testo* 14 (2016): 411–56, at 417–26. For the many places in which Pletho's excerpts from Plutarch diverge from all other witnesses, see below, n. 67. Finally, note also Pletho's editing of the Chaldean oracles, both for coherence with his own views and for internal consistency, discussed by B. Tambrun-Kraster and M. Tardieu, *Oracles chaldaïques: Recension de Georges Gémiste Pléthon: Édition critique* (Athens, 1995), 155–56.

Pletho's advice to the rulers of Byzantium reveals his preoccupation with the challenges of the present. But for solutions he looked to the past. The reforms which Pletho urged publicly were often pragmatic in orientation—fortification of the isthmus or reform of the army, religion, and taxation—but they drew lessons from the decline of earlier states, such as Sparta and Rome, and from the success of others, like the Ottomans. For Pletho, as for Plato, there was an intimate link between philosophy, theology, civic legislation, and military survival.⁸ Political change required ideological reform, and Pletho was a pioneer in the construction of a new “Hellenic” identity and legislation designed to produce a powerful Greek state modeled on ancient examples. This entailed a radically new sense of self. Whereas the Greek-speaking states of the Late Byzantine world traditionally thought of themselves as “Romans” (Ῥωμαῖοι), the successor of the ancient Roman Empire moved to Byzantium by Constantine, Pletho chose to orient this identity on the ancient Greeks or Hellenes.⁹

But in medieval Greek, the word “Greeks” (Ἕλληνες, *Hellēnes*) had long been used by Christians to refer to pre-Christian “pagans,” and for Pletho, these two sides of “Greek” identity seem inextricable.¹⁰ His deep knowledge of classical Greek language and literature was part of an engagement with pagan heritage that was not publicly acceptable in contemporary Christian society. His *Laws*, named in allusion to Plato's *Laws*, laid out a form of polytheistic theology and liturgy, complete with prayers to Zeus, Poseidon, Hera, and the other pagan gods. This theology was a novel hybrid of Neoplatonic philosophy, cultic rituals, and

the Olympian gods of ancient Greece, but Pletho presented it as an ancient doctrine that had been professed without variation by all the great pagan philosophers of antiquity from Zoroaster to Iamblichus.

This was a provocative rewriting of the *prisca theologia*—the “ancient theology”—that had undergirded Jewish and Christian apologetics since antiquity. Hellenistic Jews and Christians typically made sense of their debt to the Greek theological tradition by the ingenious claim that Moses was the ultimate source of all that was good in pagan philosophy and that the truths revealed on Sinai had reached the Greeks either through contact with Egyptian priests or through early Bible translations.¹¹ The wisdom of the Greeks, in this view, had its origins in the “Laws” (νόμοι) of the best “lawgiver” (νομοθέτης), Moses—that is, in the biblical Pentateuch. Pletho turned this Judeo-Christian model on its head and returned to older Neoplatonic models. In his *Laws*, Pletho ignored Moses entirely, replacing him with Zoroaster, and dismissed all who departed from Zoroaster's polytheistic doctrine as “sophists” and “charlatans” pushing irrational “innovations.” These derisive allusions aside, he passed over the Hebrew prophets, Jesus, the apostles, and the church fathers in total silence.¹² Comparable to the Neoplatonic philosophies of later antiquity, Pletho's system grafted

8 See, e.g., Pletho's *Address to Theodore* (PG 160:841–66; ed. S. Lampros, *Παλαιολόγεια καὶ Πελοποννησιακά*, 4 vols. [Athens, 1930], 4:113–35), with discussion by Masai, *Pléthon*, 66–101, and Woodhouse, *Plethon*, 92–106.

9 For Pletho's attempt to forge a new Hellenic identity in preference to the traditional Byzantine self-understanding based in a Roman identity, see B. Tambrun, *Pléthon: Le retour de Platon* (Paris, 2006); Carabà, *Pletho*; N. Siniossoglou, *Radical Platonism in Byzantium: Illumination and Utopia in Gemistos Plethon* (Cambridge, 2011); and H. Lamers, *Greece Reinvented: Transformations of Byzantine Hellenism in Renaissance Italy* (Leiden, 2015), 29–62, with further references. Pletho's student, Laonikos, also predicted the existence of a powerful future Hellenic state in his *Histories* (1.4).

10 On the changing sense of “Hellene” in the Byzantine world, see C. Livanos, “Monotheists, Dualists and Pagans,” in *The Byzantine World*, ed. P. Stephenson (London, 2010), 103–13.

11 For Josephus's polemical construction of an “ancient theology,” which attempted to win philosophical respect for Judaism by making Moses the source of the best theological doctrines of the Greek philosophers, see esp. *Ap.* 2.168–69. For the tradition of the *prisca theologia* in antiquity and the Renaissance, see D. P. Walker, *The Ancient Theology: Studies in Christian Platonism from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY, 1972); J. Monfasani, *George of Trebizond: A Biography and a Study of His Rhetoric and Logic* (Leiden, 1976); and on Zoroaster in Pletho and later thought, see M. Stausberg, *Faszination Zarathushtra: Zoroaster und die Europäische Religionsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin, 1988), 35–92.

12 The vision is laid out most extensively at *Laws* 1.2 (ed. C. Alexandre, *Pléthon: Traité des Lois*, new ed. [Paris, 1982], 26–36), especially his disparaging remark that he will not follow “the novelties invented yesterday or the day before by sophists” (τοῖς χθές τε καὶ πρῶν ὑπὸ σοφιστῶν δὴ τινῶν νεωτερισμένοις) who use pseudologic, prophecy, and the indoctrination of the young to gain cultural authority over the older and more correct philosophical positions that Pletho himself advocates. Scholarios, one outraged reader of the *Laws*, sought to explain the dethroning of Moses by reference to Pletho's teacher, the Jewish apostate Elissaios, whose interest in Averroes and Aristotle led him to neglect Moses (*Letter to Princess Theodora*; in G. Scholarios, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 4, *Polémique contre Pléthon; Oeuvres pastorales, ascétiques, liturgiques, poétiques; Correspondance; Chronographie* [Paris, 1935], 152–53).

Platonic philosophy onto the pre-Christian polytheism of ancient Greece by equating the major deities with philosophical principles.¹³

Although a number of Pletho's contemporaries seem to have been aware of the existence of the *Laws* during his lifetime—and some less controversial parts of it were in circulation—Pletho never made the whole book public and did not live to see the controversy it caused. After his death, the *Laws* came into the hands of the rulers of Mistra, who handed it over to George Scholarios, appointed Orthodox patriarch of Constantinople by the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II soon after the capture of the city in 1453. After some hesitation and prevarication, Scholarios declared Pletho's book anathema and performatively burned it before witnesses, preserving only the index along with a selection of the earlier and later chapters, supposedly to attest to its horrifying content.¹⁴

In letters ostensibly written to justify his actions, Scholarios sketched a polemical biography of Pletho: his “apostasy,” Scholarios claimed, went back to his days at the court of the Ottoman sultan, where he studied with an apostate Jew called Elissaios, an expert in Averroes and Aristotle who apparently died by fire. Pletho himself, Scholarios says, was later expelled from Constantinople for his heretical views by the emperor Manuel II (1350–1425), after which he went to the Peloponnese and further cultivated his theological deviance.¹⁵

13 The theology of Julian the Apostate provides a useful comparison in multiple respects: see V. Limberis, “‘Religion’ as the Cipher for Identity: The Cases of Emperor Julian, Libanius, and Gregory Nazianzus,” *HTR* 93.4 (2000): 373–400, at 377.

14 For various reconstructions of the chronology of these events, see Woodhouse, *Pletho*, 356–79; J. Monfasani, “Pletho's Date of Death and the Burning of His *Laws*,” *BZ* 98.2 (2006): 459–63; and M. Mavroudi, “Pletho as Subversive and His Reception in the Islamic World,” in *Power and Subversion in Byzantium: Papers from the Forty-Third Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 2010*, SPBS 17, ed. D. Angelov and M. Saxby (Farnham, 2013), 177–203, at 192–93.

15 *Letter to Princess Theodora* (Scholarios, *Oeuvres*, 152–53); and *Letter to the Exarch Joseph* (Scholarios, *Oeuvres*, 162). That Scholarios's assertions have some factual basis—despite his hostile purpose—is suggested by Pletho's statement that he learned Averroes “from the wisest Italians and Jews” (παρά τε τῶν Ἰταλῶν τῶν σοφωτέρων καὶ Ἰουδαίων, in E. V. Maltese, *Georgii Gemisti Plethonis Contra Scholarii pro Aristotele obiectiones* [Leipzig, 1988], 4.4). There is no particular reason to distrust Scholarios's report of the name of Pletho's teacher. For various assessments of Pletho's knowledge of and contact with Jewish, Islamic, and Zoroastrian philosophy, and disputed attempts to

While Scholarios was attacking Pletho's reputation in Ottoman Greece, another of his personal enemies was doing the same in Italy. In the late 1450s the Cretan émigré George of Trebizond, writing in Latin, launched a posthumous invective against Pletho, in what was ostensibly a polemic against Platonism. George clearly knew of the existence of the *Laws*, which he describes as a book written “against Christ our Lord,” and claimed to have seen Pletho's hymns to the sun,¹⁶ which were, he says, in regular use during the worship of pagan deities offered by Pletho and others in Mistra. George crowned this hostile vision by figuring Pletho as a diabolical heretic—a “second Muhammad” and a “fourth Plato”—plotting the downfall of Christianity and the global triumph of Platonic-paganism.¹⁷

Scholars have struggled to reconcile the accusations of Scholarios and George of Trebizond with other facts of Pletho's life: Pletho occupied a prominent position in an apparently orthodox Christian society, was an intimate advisor to several Byzantine emperors, taught and mentored a range of future religious leaders (including Mark Eugenikos, Bessarion, and probably Isidore of Kiev¹⁸), and took part in sensitive political debates on the finer points of Christian dogma. The debate about his true theological views continues. Was Pletho at the

identify Elissaios with the Jewish physician Elisha, then active in the Ottoman court, see Mavroudi, “Plato as Subversive,” 189, 197–99, and S. Mariev, “Scholarios' Account of Pletho's Jewish Teacher Elissaios as a Historical Fact and Literary Fiction,” in *Verflechtungen zwischen Byzanz und dem Orient: Beiträge aus der Sektion ‘Byzantinistik’ im Rahmen des 32. Deutschen Orientalistentages in Münster (23.–27. September 2013)*, ed. M. Grünbart (Berlin, 2019), 75–92.

16 See George's *Protectio Aristotelis problematum* 288, 704–9, and *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* 3.20, both now edited with translation by J. Monfasani, *Vindicatio Aristotelis: Two Works of George of Trebizond in the Plato-Aristotle Controversy of the Fifteenth Century* (Tempe, AZ, 2021), 146–47, 260–61, 958–71.

17 *Comparatio philosophorum Platonis et Aristotelis* 3.20.1, 62, respectively. On George's attacks more broadly, see Monfasani, *Vindicatio*, 34–38, 342–44, 349–52; Woodhouse, *Pletho*, 365–69; A. Berger, “Pletho in Italien,” in *Der Beitrag der byzantinischen Gelehrten zur abendländischen Renaissance des 14. und 15. Jahrhunderts*, ed. E. Konstantinou (Frankfurt, 2006), 79–89, at 85; and Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 149–59. To explain George's counting: the second Plato was Epicurus, and the third Muhammad.

18 On these students of Pletho, see J. Monfasani, “Cardinal Bessarion and the Latins,” in *Bessarion's Treasure: Editing, Translating and Interpreting Bessarion's Literary Heritage*, ed. S. Mariev (Berlin, 2021), 5–20, at 5, who notes that “spending time in Mistra with Pletho was almost an ordinary part of the educational *cursus honoris*.”

center of a broader culture of theological heterodoxy among the Peloponnesian aristocracy, which would in turn inspire neo-paganism among other scholars and noble houses in Rimini, Rome, and Florence? Or did he systematically conceal his views from all but a select few? Did he perhaps only develop his more strident form of paganism in extreme old age? Or might he and like-minded contemporaries have viewed his fascination with Olympian polytheism and Platonic philosophy as somehow compatible with Christianity?¹⁹

A conspicuous blank, to date, has been the lack of chronological evidence indicating when Pletho first self-consciously embraced some form of philosophical paganism. With understandable distrust of polemical claims by Pletho's personal enemies, Scholarios and George of Trebizond, several scholars have concluded that some important developments occurred late in Pletho's very long life. Woodhouse, for example, views the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438–1439) as an intellectual turning point and thinks that all Pletho's major works, including the *Laws*, were completed after this date; John Monfasani has argued that Pletho only developed his final version of the *prisca theologia*, with Zoroaster supplanting Moses, in the 1440s.²⁰ Such

reconstructions would provide us with a philosopher whose decisive turn to paganism postdated both his teaching of Bessarion and his participation in church councils.

But, as we will see, Pletho's manuscript of Herodotus indicates that this was not the case.²¹ It reveals that Pletho was already drawing his intellectual genealogy back to Zoroaster, the ancient Persians, and archaic Greek sages at a much earlier date—at the very latest by the mid-1430s, and most likely by the 1420s. It also suggests that Pletho did not consider the *Laws* a learned thought experiment with no real-world consequences, as Vojtěch Hladký and others have argued.²² Pletho's editorial interventions create a textual reality in his manuscripts of ancient Greek authors that corresponds to the historical claims of the *Laws* and, in a sense, provides it with evidentiary foundations. This process—which looks intriguingly like the formation of a new scriptural canon—was well underway by the time Bessarion finished his studies with Pletho in Mistra and before they traveled to Italy for the council of union in Ferrara and Florence.

The presence of fixed dates in Pletho's intellectual development sheds a new light on the religious heterodoxy of the Late Byzantine world and Renaissance Italy. For the last three decades of his life, and perhaps longer, Pletho was actively developing a pointedly anti-Christian worldview at the same time as he continued to pay lip service to the dominant intellectual paradigms of Christianity.²³ It seems likely that

19 This last view is eloquently urged by J. Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance*, vol. 1 (Leiden, 1990), 196–205. V. Hladký, *The Philosophy of Gemistos Pletho: Platonism in Late Byzantium, between Hellenism and Orthodoxy* (Farnham, 2014), esp. 251–67, 278–82, understands the *Laws* rather as a bold utopian thought experiment, part of “the pagan dream of the Renaissance,” written by an idiosyncratic Christian; E. Wind, *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance* (New York, 1980), 244–48, explores the comparison with Thomas More's *Utopia*. Contrast Siniosoglou, *Radical Platonism*, who sees Pletho as a radical Platonist and pagan. For an outline of scholarly assessments, see Mavroudi, “Pletho as Subversive,” 178–81. Valuable discussions of Pletho's theology and the religious heterodoxy in his circle is found in Masai, *Pléthon*; J. Monfasani, “Platonic Paganism in the 15th Century,” in *Reconsidering the Renaissance: Papers from the Twenty-First Annual Conference*, ed. M. A. Di Cesare (Binghamton, NY, 1992), 45–61; Tambrun, *Pléthon*; Carabă, *Pletho*, 149–95; and Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 43–45.

20 See Woodhouse, *Pletho*, 12, and Livanos, “Monotheists,” 110; J. Monfasani, “*Prisca Theologia* in the Plato-Aristotle Controversy before Ficino,” repr. in J. Monfasani, *Renaissance Humanism, from the Middle Ages to Modern Times* (Ashgate, 2015), 47–59, at 52–56, suggests that Pletho's “full notion of Zoroaster as the progenitor of ancient theology did not crystallize in final form in Pletho's mind until the 1440s,” since Bessarion places no emphasis on Zoroaster in his exchange of letters with Pletho in 1446–1447. Berger, “Pletho,” 83–84, suggests that it was at the council in Italy that Gemistos first found the courage to openly talk of his unconventional religious and

philosophical views and adopted the name “Pletho,” a further step toward Platonic neo-paganism.

21 This is an important difference between the textual stemma given below and that reconstructed by J. Bértola, “A First Critical Edition of the Cycle of Epigrams on Herodotus in the Margins of Manuscript Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 70.6 and Some of Its *Apographa*,” *JÖB* 72 (2022): 63–96, at 81, who understands Ch (copied in 1440) to be a direct copy of T. Since Ch does not contain any of Pletho's interventions, Bértola dates all these to the period after 1440. The crucial evidence against this reconstruction is Be (copied by Bessarion in Mistra in 1436), which shows that (a) the Neapolitan manuscript cannot have been a direct copy of T and (b) Pletho's interventions are significantly earlier than hitherto believed (certainly predating 1436). For more detailed discussion, see A. Ellis, “A New Set of *Recentiores* of Herodotus: T and the ‘Triclinian Family’ of Manuscripts” (in prep.).

22 See above, n. 19, and esp. Hladký, *Philosophy*, 263–67.

23 For an example, see Pletho's letter to Scholarios, dated to ca. 1444 and published in Bacchelli, “La *Considération*,” at 173–74,

those who knew him in Mistra had the opportunity to observe how this tension played out in practice. One of Pletho's most ardent admirers was Demetrios Raoul Kabakes, an aristocrat who spent his life in active service to the Palaiologan dynasty. Kabakes developed his own form of heliocentric theology and religious praxis and, in later life, devoted much energy to collecting and copying what survived of Pletho's writings, including fragments of the work condemned and burned by Scholarios.²⁴ In his private notes, Kabakes wrote explicitly about the necessity of cultivating *two* religions: both ancestral practices (in his case, Christianity) and one's personal beliefs. As Bacchelli has recently suggested, this may reflect Kabakes' understanding of the delicate line walked by Pletho and others in Mistra several decades earlier—though Pletho might have formulated his compromise between innovation and tradition differently.²⁵

Also close to Pletho was Bessarion, an Orthodox monk from Trebizond, who studied with Pletho in Mistra between 1433 and 1436 before emigrating to Italy and becoming one of the foremost cardinals of the Roman Church. After the fall of Constantinople, Bessarion's combination of institutional power, erudition, and elite contacts spun a vast web on which many remarkable figures landed: he supported Greek refugees like Kabakes, he brokered international marriages for the exiled imperial family, he collaborated with Pope Nicholas V to organize Latin translations of the seminal works of ancient Greek literature, and he worked closely with Italian and Greek scholars and scribes to amass a vast library of Greek literature—and to defend

Platonism from the attacks of George of Trebizond. Bessarion was well aware of Pletho's unconventional theological views. In a delicately phrased letter of condolence addressed to Pletho's sons in Greece, Bessarion says that the soul of their "joint father and teacher" has journeyed to the heavens to dance with the Olympian gods; he describes Pletho as the wisest Greek sage since Plato, with the exception of Aristotle, and says that Pletho would even seem to be a reincarnation of Plato *if* one were to believe Plato's and Pythagoras's ideas on the transmigration of the soul.²⁶

Pletho must have known many other scholars from Mistra, including Demetrios Chalkokondyles (1423–1511), who later taught rhetoric and Greek literature in Padua, Florence, and Milan, and his younger relative Laonikos Chalkokondyles, who later wrote a history of the Byzantine Empire and its fall closely modeled on the classical historians Herodotus and Thucydides. Laonikos also seems to have studied with Pletho: he was spotted in Pletho's company in the summer of 1447, when he guided the Italian humanist Ciriaco of Ancona around the ruins of Sparta, and he left a note in the flyleaf of Pletho's copy of Herodotus (T), which he may have entered while studying with him or, perhaps, after acquiring the codex after Pletho's death.²⁷ Particularly

n. 19, in which Pletho states that the gospels supported the anti-Unionist position that he shared with Scholarios.

24 For an overview of Kabakes' remarkable life, see esp. Bacchelli, "La *Considération*," 169–92, which details his links with Bessarion and Pletho. For a study of his place in the scribal activities of Mistra, see G. De Gregorio, "Attività scrittoria a Mistra nell'ultima età paleologa: Il caso del cod. Mut. Gr. 144," *Scrittura e Civiltà* 18 (1994): 243–80.

25 For Kabakes' comments on this point, see Bacchelli "La *Considération*," 211. But any attempt to access Pletho's attitudes through the writings of Kabakes must proceed cautiously. As Kabakes himself makes clear (with obvious regret), the two men had extremely different metaphysical and theological views, despite their friendship and Kabakes' outspoken admiration of Pletho. On the differences between their theologies, see I. P. Medvedev, "Solar Cult in Pletho's Philosophy?," *Βυζαντινά* 13 (1985): 739–47; Monfasani, "Platonic Paganism," 57–58; and Bacchelli, "La *Considération*," 198–206 (with doxography at 165–69).

26 The letter, published in L. Mohler, *Aus Bessarions Gelehrtenkreis: Abhandlungen, Reden, Briefe* (Paderborn, 1942), 468–69, and discussed in Irmscher, "Epitaph," 188, shows notable similarities with the exchange between Kabakes and Bessarion that took place in Rome after 1467, described below (n. 30). For Bessarion's clear knowledge of Pletho's pagan views and intellectual system—as evidenced in a letter sent to Pletho in 1446–1447—see esp. Monfasani, "Cardinal Bessarion," 13–17.

27 Ciriaco's account of the "noble youth Nicolaus Chalkokandeles the Athenian" (*iuvenem ingenuum Nicolaum Χαλκοκανδήλην Atheniensem*) is printed and translated in E. W. Bodnar, ed. and trans., *Cyriac of Ancona: Later Travels*, I Tatti Renaissance Library 10 (Cambridge, MA, 2003), 298. For the little we know of Laonikos's life—and whether his work was addressed to the Italian West or the Ottoman East—see A. Akışık, "Self and Other in the Renaissance: Laonikos Chalkokondyles and Late Byzantine Intellectuals" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013); A. Akışık, "A Question of Audience: Laonikos Chalkokondyles' Hellenism," *BZ* 112.1 (2019): 1–30; and A. Kaldellis, *A New Herodotus: Laonikos Chalkokondyles on the Ottoman Empire, the Fall of Byzantium, and the Emergence of the West*, DOML Supplement (Washington, DC, 2015), 1–18. For links between Pletho and Laonikos, see Kaldellis, *New Herodotus*, 209–16. For Laonikos's subscription on the final folio of Pletho's copy of Herodotus, see the transcription in A. Turyn, *The Byzantine Manuscript Tradition of the Tragedies of Euripides* (Rome, 1970), 230, printed with translations by both Kaldellis, *New Herodotus*, 45–46,

telling is Laonikos's tendency to present himself and his contemporaries as "Hellenes" in continuity with the ancients. The near total absence of expressly Christian ideas in Laonikos's writing also suggests the influence of Pletho's philosophical paganism.²⁸ Another historian, Michael Kritoboulos of Imbros (born ca. 1400–1410), also seems to have copied Pletho's manuscript of Herodotus during Pletho's lifetime, hinting at an otherwise unattested stay in Mistra and raising the possibility that he, like Bessarion, was among the many scholars of that generation to study with Pletho.²⁹

Pletho's intellectual openness with the many scholars, court officials, and nobles who dwelt in or passed through Mistra remains an obscure chapter in the history of Late Byzantine and Renaissance Platonism. In spite of the attempts of Scholarios and George of Trebizond to brand Pletho a pagan and a heretic, many prominent Greek émigrés and Italian scholars venerated his memory even though some were well aware of his unusual views. Bessarion referred to Pletho with utmost respect in the 1450s and 1460s and used his contacts to collect many of Pletho's old manuscripts and bequeath them to the city of Venice.³⁰ Kabakes spent

significant portions of his old age in Rome copying the surviving fragments of Pletho's *Laws* and composing his own prayers to the Sun—at the same time as his son, Emanuel, cultivated papal contacts and gained literary fame as a Latin poet under the name of Manilius.³¹ Sigismondo Malatesta, Duke of Rimini, connected by marriage to the despots of Mistra, collected Pletho's body from Mistra during an abortive crusade against the Ottomans in the Peloponnese in 1464 and brought the philosopher's remains to Rimini, where he interned them in the *Tempio Malatestiano*.³² George of Trebizond claims to have warned Sigismondo that dire consequences would come of polluting a Christian church with "the Apollo who lives in the body of Gemistus," a prophecy he believed confirmed when Sigismondo fell ill twice and finally died in 1468.³³ But it seems that neither Sigismondo nor his widow followed George's advice to cast the philosopher's bones into the sea.

and D. Bianconi, "L'Erodoto di Nicola Tricline, Giorgio Gemisto Pletone e Demetrio Raoul Cabace: Il Laur. Plut. 70.6 da Tessalonica a Roma, passando per Mistra," *BollClass* 43 (2022): 61–110, at 67.

28 For Laonikos's views on religion and Islam, and the probable influence of Pletho, see Kaldellis, *New Herodotus*, 102–70, and Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 45–51.

29 For the little known about Kritoboulos's education and whereabouts, see the biographical account in D. R. Reinsch, ed., *Critobuli imbrotae historiae*, CFHB Series Berolinensis 22 (Berlin, 1983), 72*–87*. Reinsch deduces that he studied in Constantinople since Ciriaco of Ancona describes Kritoboulos as a good friend of Scholarios (who is not known to have visited Imbros). He was certainly in Imbros in 1444 when he was visited there by Ciriaco. It is tempting to assume that Kritoboulos copied Pletho's Herodotus in the early 1460s if it were in Kabakes' possession, since (a) Kritoboulos was probably in close contact with Kabakes in the period 1460–1466; (b) Kabakes was a friend of Pletho with influential contacts and interest in his works; and (c) Kabakes emigrated to Rome in 1466 shortly before T turns up in Bessarion's circle (1469). But the fact that Kritoboulos's copy seems to be made *before* the last characteristically Plethonian deletion (see below, pp. 336–37, on Hdt. 1.71.2) suggests that his copy was made before Pletho's death in the early 1450s. There is no evidence that Pletho lent his manuscript elsewhere, raising the possibility that Kritoboulos's education included a period in Mistra in Pletho's circle. For Kritoboulos's use of Herodotus in his own writings, see Reinsch, *Critobuli*, 54*–55*.

30 With the evidence below, note esp. Kabakes' report of Bessarion's dinner time remarks to him in Vat. gr. 2236, fol. 141v: "[Bessarion]

... answered . . . 'I wish to tell you in truth that even now since the time of Plotinus, which was 1,400 years ago, Hellas created no wiser person than Pletho'" (κυρ. [Βισσαρίων] . . . ἀπεκρίθη . . . θέλο σε ἡπὴν μετὰ ἀληθείας καὶ νῦν ὅτι ἀπὸ τοῦ Πλωτίνου τὸν κερὸν, ὃς ἦν πρὸ χιλίων τετρακοσίων ἐτῶν, σοφότερον ἄνθρωπον οὐδένα ἐποίησεν ἢ Ἑλλάς τοῦ Πλήθωνος). For Bessarion's notes indicating to posterity that Marc. gr. 379 and 406 were written *manu Plethonis*, see A. Diller, "The Autographs of Georgius Gemistus Pletho," *Scriptorium* 10 (1956): 27–41, at 27–28, and E. Mioni, "Bessarione scriba e alcuni suoi collaboratori," in *Miscellanea Marciana di studi Bessarionei (a coronamento del V Centenario della donazione nicena)* (Padua, 1976), 263–318, at 301.

31 On the life, poetry, and career of Manilius, see Lamers, *Greece Reinvented*, 225–32, and most recently H. Lamers, ed. and trans., *The Latin Poems of Manilius Cabacius Rallus of Sparta: On Longing, Fortune, and Displacement* (Leiden, 2024), with further references.

32 For broader intellectual links between Mistra and Rimini, see A. Mattiello, "The Elephant on the Page: Ciriaco d'Ancona in Mystras," in *Cross-Cultural Interaction between Byzantium and the West, 1204–1669: Whose Mediterranean Is It Anyway?*, ed. A. Lymberopoulou (London, 2018), 203–16, who notes the role of Ciriaco of Ancona as one of several mediators who met the imperial family, Kabakes, Pletho, and Laonikos on various trips. For Sigismondo's expedition and the various epitaphs for Pletho, see Irmscher, "Epitaphie"; Berger, "Plethon," 88–89; and A. F. D'Elia, *Pagan Virtue in a Christian World: Sigismondo Malatesta and the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA, 2016), 269–72. For Sigismondo's invitation to Gemistos to join his court at Rimini (never accepted), see Woodhouse, *Plethon*, 147, 159–60. For the flight of Thomas Palaiologos, last despot of Mistra, to Malatestan Rimini in 1460 before he continued on to Rome, see Berger, "Plethon," 88.

33 D'Elia, *Pagan Virtue*, 272, and Monfasani, *George of Trebizond*, 214.

In Italy, the vision of Pletho as a positive inspiration triumphed over the polemics of George of Trebizond and Scholarios. Pletho was remembered by the most powerful voices as a glorious reincarnation of the spirit of Platonic philosophy to be admired and imitated, not a sinister resurrection of Platonic-Islamic heresy.³⁴ Pletho's visit to Italy during the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438–1439 would acquire semi-legendary status during the latter half of the fifteenth century: Marsilio Ficino claimed that the lectures that this “second Plato” gave at the house of Cardinal Cesarini in Florence impressed Italian scholars and inspired Cosimo de' Medici's fascination with Platonism.³⁵ The details that follow, from Pletho's manuscript of Herodotus, provide a unique opportunity to observe the private work of this scholar in a period before his visit to Italy. It shows us how far down the road to Platonic paganism he had already traveled by the time he taught Bessarion and others in Mistra. And the way his students handled the manuscript in Rome after his death sheds new light on how much some of Pletho's students and friends knew of his unusual editorial activities—and his pagan vision of the *prisca theologia*.

Pletho's Editing of Herodotus: A Text-Critical Reconstruction

The first link between Pletho and a manuscript of Herodotus was made in 2005 when Daniele Bianconi observed that two folia in a manuscript of Herodotus's *Histories* today in Florence (T) are in Pletho's handwriting, a script “nervous, irregular, and devoid of harmony

and equilibrium.”³⁶ Fabio Pagani, discussing Pletho's deletions in manuscripts of Plato, suggested that the philosopher from Mistra might also have been responsible for the most visible textual intervention in T: a deletion in Herodotus's account of the theology of the ancient Persians and Magi at 1.131.2.³⁷ Most recently, Julián Bértola has suggested that Pletho might have been responsible for two other alterations to the text at 1.2.1 and 1.32.1.³⁸ The evidence below confirms the suggestions of Pagani and Bértola and reveals a wide range of other textual alterations, undertaken in multiple stages, that fit the editorial profile of Pletho. In what follows, I outline the method of reconstruction, elaborated in the Appendix and illustrated by the stemma (see above, Fig. 1).

The Florentine manuscript of Herodotus, T, was copied many times between its creation in 1318 by Nikolaos Triklines and the late fifteenth century. Text-critical examination suggests that several of these copies are uncontaminated—that is, copied *directly* and *only* from T. Several of these copies were made during Pletho's life, while he seems to have owned the codex. Others are dated by subscriptions to the period before he came into possession of the manuscript or after his death: one was made in 1372 in Astros (an eastern port in the Despotate of Morea) by an archivist called Konstantinos (siglum Ko);³⁹ another was made in 1436 by Bessarion in Mistra at the end of his studies with Pletho (siglum Be); another by Michael Kritoboulos, apparently between 1436 and Pletho's death, probably

34 For Bessarion's comment on Pletho as a (hypothetical) reincarnation of Plato, see above, n. 26. Kabakes annotates his recollections of Bessarion's table talk with a Platonic trinity: “Plato, Plotinus, Pletho” (Πλάτων · Πλωτίνος · Πλήθων), Vat. gr. 2236, fol. 141v.

35 For Ficino's account and description of Pletho as “almost a second Plato” (*quasi Platonem alterum*), see the preface to his 1492 translation of Plotinus (cited in Alexandre, *Pléthon*, xvi, n. 1). For discussions of its dubious historicity and how to understand Ficino's reference to Cosimo's “Platonic academy,” see J. Monfasani, “Two Fifteenth-Century ‘Platonic Academies’: Bessarion's and Ficino's,” in J. Monfasani, *Renaissance Humanism, from the Middle Ages to Modern Times* (Ashgate, 2015), 61–76, with further references, and Siniosoglou, *Radical Platonism*, 8–9, with n. 27. For a historical assessment of Pletho's influence on Renaissance Platonism—which was largely indirect and mediated through students like Bessarion—see Hankins, *Plato*, 194, 207–8, 436–40.

36 See D. Bianconi, “La biblioteca di Cora tra Massimo Planude e Niceforo Gregora: Una questione di mani,” *Segno e Testo* 3 (2005): 391–438, at 403–5, and D. Bianconi, *Tessalonica nell'età dei Paleologi: Le pratiche intellettuali nel riflesso della cultura scritta* (Paris, 2005), 138–40.

37 See the appendix to Pagani, “*Damnata verba*,” 201, an ascription accepted also by Bianconi, “L'Erodoto,” 66.

38 Bértola, “Epigrams,” 66, esp. n. 16. Julián Bértola and I discovered that we were working on different ends of the same issue in summer 2021. Although Bértola focuses on a previously unedited cycle of poems in the margins of T (and nine manuscripts derived from it), he provides a concise and cautious discussion of three of Pletho's editorial interventions and his article represents the best text-critical reconstruction of the T family to date. In most points, our findings agree. Bértola's study was recently joined by Bianconi, “L'Erodoto.” To avoid repetition, where practical, I refer the reader to their fuller discussions of manuscripts and bibliography.

39 A full list of sigla and manuscripts cited can be found in the Appendix, below.

in Mistra (siglum Mi);⁴⁰ another in 1469 for Bessarion in Rome by the Cretan scribe John Plousiadenos (siglum Pl); and another in Rome in 1480 by Pletho's admirer Kabakes, who seems to have owned T for a time (siglum Ka).⁴¹

These copies, along with others whose precise dates or copyists are unclear, can be used as historical snapshots of the Florentine manuscript at various points of its history. In the many places where Pletho's manuscript has been rewritten, it is possible to check not only what the original text said (by looking, for instance, at Konstantinos's 1372 copy) but also to establish the date by which the change had been made. Comparison of the Florentine manuscript with these copies allows us to distinguish various phases of editing work that were done to the text by a range of readers—many by Pletho himself.

T emerges as a manuscript with an unusually visible path through Late Byzantine intellectual history.⁴² Its association with some of the more intriguing figures of the fifteenth century has attracted much speculation, some of which can be laid to rest.⁴³ The presence of T in the Peloponnese (at Astros in 1372 and at Mistra by the 1430s, where Pletho was working on it both before and after 1436) suggests that it was not in Constantinople in the 1420s or early 1430s.⁴⁴ There is no evidence that Lorenzo Valla (ca. 1406–1457) used this manuscript to make his Latin translation of Herodotus in the 1450s, as Alberti claimed.⁴⁵ Valla was not behind a series of

marginal supplements to the text of this manuscript.⁴⁶ Laonikos Chalkokondyles was not responsible for the deletions and rewritings of the text, as claimed by Hemmerdinger and others, nor was Kabakes, as I suggested in 2015.⁴⁷ These alterations had, in fact, already been completed when Laonikos was a young child, and they far exceed Kabakes' literary competence.

It is still unclear precisely how Pletho's Herodotus made its way to Rome, though it seems unlikely that the manuscript was brought to Italy by Pletho in 1438 and left there after the Council of Ferrara-Florence.⁴⁸ The

claim is widely accepted by, for instance, De Gregorio, "L'Erodoto," 47, n. 49; N. G. Wilson, *Herodoti Historiae*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2015), 1:xi; and Bértola, "Epigrams," 78–79, though recently treated with skepticism by Bianconi, "L'Erodoto," 85, n. 68; S. Pagliaroli, *L'Erodoto del Valla* (Messina, 2006), 107, n. 1, ventures no opinion. For the weakness of the argument, see Ellis, "Recentiores."

46 Contrast E. B. Fryde, *Humanism and Renaissance Historiography* (London, 1983), 91, apparently inspired by Alberti's theory, who ascribed to Valla the supplements detailed at Tη (in the Appendix). The evidence below reveals that these were in fact added by Kabakes, as recently established independently on palaeographic grounds in Bianconi, "L'Erodoto," 72–73, and Bértola "Epigrams," 66, n. 18.

47 For the attribution of all alterations in T (including the textual rewriting at 1.32.1, discussed below) to Laonikos, see Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits*, 107–8, followed by G. B. Alberti, "Alcuni recentiores di Erodoto," *BollClass* 20 (1999): 3–10, at 8–9, and De Gregorio, "L'Erodoto," 47, n. 49. For my suggestion that Kabakes might have been responsible, see A. Ellis, "Mortal Misfortunes, θεὸς ἀνάγκης, and τὸ θεῖον φθονερόν: The Socratic Seeds of Later Debate on Herodotus's Theology," in *God in History: Reading and Rewriting Herodotean Theology from Plutarch to the Renaissance*, ed. A. Ellis, *Histos Supplement* 4 (Newcastle, 2015), 17–40, at 35–36.

48 A theory advanced by Bianconi in "La biblioteca," 404, n. 35, and *Tessalonica*, 140–41, and further explored in "L'Erodoto," 86–87, with n. 99. If the manuscript left Greece for good in the late 1430s, when Laonikos was a child, then he must have added his subscription to folio 34ov much later, when he chanced on Pletho's old manuscript in Italy in someone else's possession. This cannot be definitively disproven, as we have no firm evidence for Laonikos's life and whereabouts after the Ottoman conquests (see above, n. 27). But since we know that Pletho and Laonikos were in Mistra in the 1440s, and that Pletho added the bifolium to T *after* mid-1436 (when Bessarion produced his copy), that Michael Kritoboulos copied T at some point *after* that, and that Pletho seems to have made further alterations to the text (at Hdt. 1.171.2) *after that*, it seems more likely that these events happened after Pletho's return from Italy. The alternative reconstruction would have to date Pletho's restoration of the bifolium to T, Kritoboulos's copy of T, and Pletho's further editing of T to the period between May 1436 and November 1437 (when Pletho departed for Italy) and date Laonikos's subscription to a much later encounter in Italy that gave him the opportunity to acquire or write in a manuscript that he found in someone else's possession. Even beyond the

40 As argued below (n. 85), Kritoboulos's copy seems to have been made after Bessarion made his copy in mid-1436 and before Pletho's death in the early 1450s.

41 For details on these manuscripts, their contents, place and time of production, and bibliography, see the Appendix, below.

42 See esp. Kaldellis, *New Herodotus*, 259–62 (appendix IV).

43 Many of these are to be traced back to B. Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits d'Hérodote et la critique verbale* (Genoa, 1981), 106–21, who combines a penchant for speculation with an unfortunate tendency to present all his ideas—observations, deductions, guesses, and errors—as fact.

44 See the suggestion by De Gregorio, "L'Erodoto," 47, with n. 49, and critical discussion by Bianconi, *Tessalonica*, 139–41; see also Bértola, "Epigrams," 79, and Ellis "Recentiores."

45 G. B. Alberti, "Erodoto nella traduzione latina di Lorenzo Valla," *BollClass* 7 (1959): 65–84, and G. B. Alberti, "Il codice Laurenziano greco LXX, 6 e la traduzione latina di Erodoto di Lorenzo Valla," *Maia* 11 (1959): 315–19. Alberti later treats the theory as certain—see his "Autografi greci di Lorenzo Valla nel codice Vaticano greco 122," *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 3 (1960): 287–90, at 289—and the

evidence suggests, rather, that it found its way to Italy only after Pletho's death and the progressive conquest of the Greek world by the Ottomans, quite probably brought by Kabakes.⁴⁹ During the 1450s and 1460s, Kabakes was both highly motivated and uniquely well placed to collect books associated with Pletho. Not only did he acquire or copy the fragments of Pletho's *Laws*, he was a high-ranking official in the service of Demetrios, Despot of Morea (who had confiscated at least some of Pletho's literary estate), both while he continued to rule as despot in the Peloponnese (until 1460) and after he accepted Ottoman control, after which point Kabakes seems to have served him as governor of Lemnos and Imbros (1460–1467).⁵⁰ The first evidence we have for T being in Italy comes in 1469, two years after Kabakes' arrival in Rome, when it turns up in Bessarion's circle. By this time, Kabakes had already read and annotated the codex. T was still in Kabakes' hands in 1480, when he copied it to produce his own manuscript (Ka) and supplemented lacunae in both codices from a third manuscript. The fact that his supplements to T break off in book 6, while those in his own copy continue into book 9, suggests that he may have parted company with T at that point; the impression is reinforced by the fact that in subsequent years he continued to read Herodotus in Ka (where he left a dense thicket of marginalia) and no longer seems to have written in T.⁵¹ Given that Kabakes was in a condition of poverty by the late 1480s, one

possibility is that he was forced to sell T around 1480 and that he copied it before doing so.⁵²

Pletho's manuscript of Herodotus enjoyed surprising popularity in the fifteenth century and traces of his editorial work can be found in almost a third of the sixty or so manuscripts of Herodotus that survive today.⁵³ Until the first Greek printing of Herodotus, the Aldine edition of 1502, Pletho's idiosyncratic recension was one of the more common texts of Herodotus to circulate in Renaissance Italy, and some of his changes made their way into Aldus's editio princeps.⁵⁴ In the

convoluted nature of this reconstruction, the most substantial objection to the theory is the lack of any explanation for why Pletho should not have brought his personal copy of Herodotus back from Italy (if he took it in the first place).

49 A. Diller, *The Textual Tradition of Strabo's Geography* (Amsterdam, 1975), 144–45, suggested what Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits*, 109, later repeated as if it were certain: that Kabakes carried T with him to Italy in 1466. The view was questioned by De Gregorio, "L'Erodoto," 47, n. 49, but is now rendered significantly more plausible by Bianconi's finding that Kabakes was responsible for adding the alternating suns and moons through the margins of T during an intensive reading of the whole codex at some point before 1469; see Bianconi, "L'Erodoto," 85–86; and the Appendix, below, under T ζ .

50 See Bacchelli "Di Demetrio," "La *Considération*," and "Gemisto Pletone, Demetrio Rhaoul Kavàkis ed il culto del sole," in *Gli antichi alla corte dei Malatesta: Echi, modelli e fortuna della tradizione classica nella Romagna del Quattrocento (l'età di Sigismondo)*, ed. F. Muccioli and F. Cenerini (Milan, 2018), 591–613.

51 For the phase of supplementary corrections in T stopping after book 6, see the Appendix, below, under T η . I am currently preparing an edition of the notes left by Kabakes in Ka while reading the *Histories* in Rome during the 1480s.

52 In 1489, Cardinal Barbo instructed his secretary, Giovanni Lorenzini, to grant Kabakes ten ducats to alleviate his poverty; see Bacchelli, "Di Demetrio," 20, n. 66, for the related correspondence and further references.

53 For the broad outlines of the textual tradition of the *Histories*—divided into the "Roman family" and the "Florentine family"—see H. B. Rosén, *Herodoti Historiae*, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1987–1995), 1:v–xlv; R. Cantore, *Per la storia del testo di Erodoto: Studi sulla famiglia romana* (Bologna, 2013), 3–7; and N. G. Wilson, *Herodotea: Studies on the Text of Herodotus* (Oxford, 2015), xi–xxvi. The text of T is oriented on the Roman family from 1–2.123 and on the Florentine family from 2.133 until the end. For the lacunae characteristic of the Roman family (of which only some are found in T), see further below, n. 120. For T's place in the broader textual tradition, see esp. G. B. Alberti, "Note ad alcuni manoscritti di Erodoto," *Maia* 12 (1960): 331–45, at 342–45; Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits*, 109–10; Rosén, *Herodoti Historiae*, 1:xxxiv–xxxv; Cantore, *Per la storia*, 62–63; and Alberti, "Alcuni recentiores." Nevertheless, Pletho's most popular conjecture (at Hdt. 1.32.6) seems to have been unknown to translators and editors of Herodotus until the early nineteenth century (after which it has been part of the standard scholarly text; see below, pp. 332–33). Traces of Pletho's editorial interventions are also visible in a series of manuscripts that descend indirectly from T via a manuscript (my Y) made after Pletho had made the greater part of his alterations (Pa Na Ox Va Do Mo Ap Ma), as well as in the editio princeps printed by the Aldine press (*Herodoti libri novem quibus Musarum indita sunt nomina* [Venice, 1502]).

54 This is, in fact, not the only such case in which Pletho's edited texts proved prolific: his modified version of Euclid, as noted by Acerbi, Martinelli Tempesta, and Vitrac, "Gli interventi," 412, "per un curioso accidente . . . ha avuto un'enorme fortuna in Occidente." As for the relationship between T and the Aldine editio princeps, the sources used by the Aldine edition include Mo and Ma, both of which were the product of careful scholarly composition of various manuscripts of Herodotus but based heavily on Y, a lost copy of T. Mo seems to have been in Venice in the late fifteenth century and was copied several times by scholars based in Venice and working with the Aldine press (see the stemma in Figure 1 for illustration and Ellis, "Recentiores," for further details). Ma, copied for Aldus in 1502 and then revised against Mo and several other manuscripts by John Gregoropoulos (working as corrector in the Aldine press), seems to have been used in the printing of the editio princeps; see B. Mondrain, "Un nouveau manuscrit

1430s, when Bessarion first came to Italy, Herodotus was largely unknown in the West. Guarino de Verona seems to have known Herodotus firsthand in the 1410s, acquired the text in Greek from Panormita in the 1420s, and may have translated Hdt. 1.1–71 into Latin before meeting Pletho in Florence.⁵⁵ But it was Pletho's student, Bessarion, who arranged for Lorenzo Valla to make the first full Latin translation of the *Histories* in the 1450s (first printed in 1474). The translation made by the Pisan humanist Mattia Palmieri (1423–1483) survives only in manuscript form, and it was not until the last quarter of the decade that Matteo Maria Boiardo (d. 1494) made an Italian version of the *Histories* on the basis of Valla's work.⁵⁶

Herodotus's early translators and editors did not rely heavily on close reproductions of Pletho's revised text. In subsequent centuries, Pletho was best known to students of ancient history for his own foray into historical writing: a short text entitled *On the Events after the Battle of Mantinea*, which consisted largely of excerpts of ancient historians, arranged so as to produce a continuation of Xenophon's *Hellenica*.⁵⁷ Nevertheless it was Pletho's edited version of Herodotus that was

read by Bessarion, Laonikos, Kritoboulos, Kabakes, and many Italian humanists—a fact with significant implications for how the “Father of History” washed up on Renaissance shores.

In what follows, I focus on Pletho's changes to the first book of the *Histories* and isolate various phases of his textual work. I distinguish two broad categories. The rarer type are theological reworkings of the sort that Pagani has identified in Pletho's manuscripts of Plato. These interventions give us, for the first time, a definite *terminus ante quem* (mid-1436) for the formulation of Pletho's de-Christianized vision of the history of philosophy and his efforts to create a revised canon of pagan Greek literature that bore out his sweeping claims about religious history. The second type of editing is more conventional philological work, conducted over many years and sometimes based on comparisons with other manuscripts, which sought to fix problems with the text, from lacunae to corruptions of spelling and sense. This latter type of editing reveals another aspect of Pletho's scholarly activities: the work of a skilled philologist with a penchant for bold conjectural emendation.⁵⁸ In the final section, I ask how Pletho himself would have understood his modifications to the content of Herodotus's *Histories*: as acts of forgery, as censorship, or as the scholarly correction of corrupted records. I suggest that Pletho, like many medieval and Renaissance scholars, may have had a deep distrust of manuscript testimony and believed that the pagan classics he prized had suffered widespread interpolation and needed “correction.”

Pletho's Editing of Herodotus Before 1436

Forging the Truth: Theological Alterations

In this section I discuss Pletho's three most striking textual interventions—a deletion and two rewritings. In the famous dialogue between the Athenian sage Solon and the Lydian king Croesus, a literary tour-de-force early in Herodotus's first book, Pletho subtly rewrites Solon's description of God. In the original text of the Florentine manuscript, T, and its early copies (listed in

d'Hérodote: La modèle de l'édition aldine,” *Scriptorium* 49.2 (1995): 263–73. Ap, copied by Aristoboulos Apostolis, ended up in the library of Gian Francesco d'Asola (1498–1557/1558), the son of Andrea Torresani and the man responsible for the Aldine editions after the death of Aldus himself in 1515. The Aldine edition of Herodotus prints several readings apparently unique to T and its copies (see the Appendix, under β, at 1.65.3), including at least one of Pletho's more subtle theological interventions (see Appendix under γ, 1.2.1) as well as several readings derived from Ψ (1.6.1: λυδὸς μὲν τὸ γένος Pa Na Ox Mo Ap Ma Ald, λυδὸς μὲν γένος, Ab T τ |rell.|).

55 For Guarino's Herodotus, see the Appendix, under Am.

56 For Palmieri's Latin translation (done before 1463 and probably begun before Valla's), see Pagliaroli, *L'Erodoto*, 73–99, and S. Pagliaroli, “Il ‘proemio’ di Mattia Palmieri alla traduzione latina delle *Storie* di Erodoto,” in S. G. Longo, *Hérodote à la Renaissance* (Turnhout, 2012). On Bioardo's translation, see D. Looney, “Herodotus and Narrative Art in Renaissance Ferrara: The Translation of Matteo Maria Boiardo,” in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Herodotus in Antiquity and Beyond*, ed. J. Priestley and V. Zali (Leiden, 2016), 232–53.

57 The text was included as an appendix to the second major Greek edition of Herodotus, by Joachim Camerarius, ed., *Herodoti libri novem* (Basel, 1541), 289–310, under the title Γεωργίου Γεμιστοῦ τοῦ καὶ Πλήθωνος ἐκ τῶν Διαδώρου καὶ Πλουτάρχου, περὶ τῶν μετὰ τὴν ἐν μαντινείᾳ μάχην, ἐν δεφάλοις διὰ ληψίς. For a modern edition, see E. V. Maltese, *Giorgii Gemisti Plethonis Opuscula de historia Graeca* (Leipzig, 1989), 28–40, and for the work's nature and sources, see E. V. Maltese, “Una Storia della Grecia dopo Mantinea in età umanistica,” *Res publica litterarum* 10 (1987): 201–8, and Diller, “Autographs.”

58 I understand these findings to match what Fabio Pagani has reconstructed of Pletho's broader editorial profile in a study he is currently preparing.

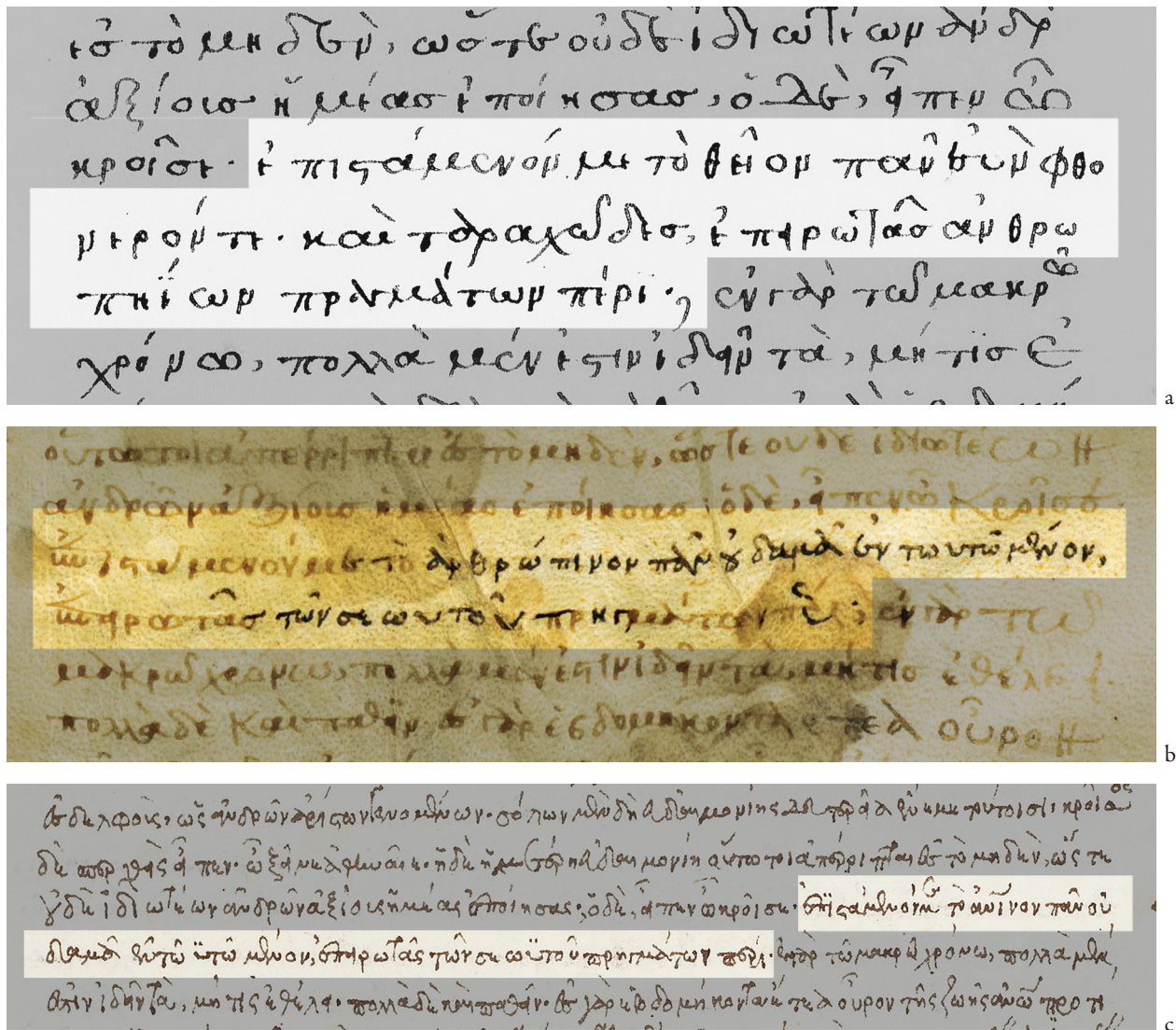


Fig. 2 Rewriting at Hdt. 1.32.1: (a) Ko, fol. 11v, (b) T, fol. 8r, and (c) Be, fol. 4r. Photos courtesy of (a) the Bibliothèque nationale de France, (b) the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, and (c) the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

the stemma; see above, Fig. 1), Solon's famous discourse on the transience of human prosperity begins with the following words:

ὦ Κροῖσε, ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐὼν
φθονερόν τε καὶ ταραχῶδες ἐπειρωτᾶς ἀνθρωπίνων
πρηγμάτων περί (Hdt. 1.32.1)

Croesus, you ask me about human affairs, when I know that the divine is entirely jealous and disruptive.

Today, however, T—like all copies of it made in or after 1436—reads:⁵⁹

59 The unusual text of Florentine manuscript at 1.32.1 is noted by Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits*, 108 (cf. 117), who states that Laonikos “remplit 2 blancs . . . de façon arbitraire, c’est-à-dire, cherchant à deviner” (he does not say why Triklines should have left the passages blank). Bértola, “Epigrams,” 66, n. 16, has independently suggested that the hand of the corrector of 1.32.1 and 1.2.1 might be Pletho’s (though he is cautious given the “mimetic” style) and suggests that the motivation may be “religious scruples.”

Ὡ Κροῖσε, ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ ἀνθρώπινον πᾶν
οὐδαμᾶ ἐν τωυτῷ μένον ἐπειρωτᾶς τῶν σεωυτοῦ
πρηγμάτων πέρι

Croesus, you ask me about your own affairs,
when I know that human affairs never stay in
the same place.

As can be seen in Figure 2, a later hand has erased several of the original words in T (fol. 8r) and, in a slightly darker ink, inserted a new text in its place. This is carefully written in Herodotus's Ionic dialect (using σεωυτοῦ rather than standard Attic σεαυτοῦ) and borrows language that closely echoes other passages from the *Histories*, particularly Herodotus's statement in the proem that "human prosperity never stays in the same place" (1.5.4: τὴν ἀνθρωπινήν ὣν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμᾶ ἐν τῶντῳ μένουσαν), a phrase that seems to have stood out in Pletho's circle.⁶⁰ The result is a sentence that fits seamlessly into the original context at the level of dialect, syntax, content, and length. It has been written so as to be visually inconspicuous, doubtless why paleographical examinations have never identified the hand as Pletho's. This theologically motivated rewriting must have been made after 1372, since Konstantinos's copy bears the normal text at this point (Ko, fol. 11v), but it had been executed by 1436, since the emended version appears seamlessly in Bessarion's hand in Be (fol. 4r) and in all subsequent copies.

Later in the same book, Pletho made a less subtle alteration to Herodotus's account of ancient Persian theology. Herodotus describes how the Persians worship Zeus on mountaintops and mentions their custom of calling "the whole circle of the sky" by the name of Zeus:

Πέρσας δὲ οἶδα νόμοισι τοιοῖσιδε χρεωμένους,
ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ
ποιευμένους ἰδρῦεσθαι, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖσι ποιεῦσι
μωρίην ἐπιφέρουσι, ὥς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι οὐκ
ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατὰ περ
οὐ τοῖς Ἕλληνας εἶναι· οἱ δὲ νομίζουσι Διὶ μὲν ἐπὶ τὰ

ὑψηλότατα τῶν ὀρέων ἀναβαίνοντες θυσίας ἔρδειν,
τὸν κύκλον πάντα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Δία καλέοντες·
θύουσι δὲ ἡλίῳ τε καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ γῇ καὶ πυρὶ καὶ
ὔδατι καὶ ἀνέμοισι. (Hdt. 1.131.2)

I know the Persians to have the following customs: it is not customary for them to set up statues, temples, and altars and they even accuse people who do so of foolishness. It seems to me that this is because the Persians, unlike the Greeks, do not think that the gods have human natures. They honor Zeus by going up to the mountaintops and making sacrifices, since they call the whole circle of the sky "Zeus." They sacrifice to the sun and the moon and earth and fire and water and winds.

As can be seen in Figure 3, this was also the original text of T, still found in the earliest copies including Ko, the copy made by Konstantinos in 1372 (fol. 50r). But today T has a blank in place of the words τὸν κύκλον πάντα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ Δία καλέοντες ("since they call the whole circle of the sky Zeus," fol. 33r). The deletion must have been made by 1436, since the copy made by Bessarion in that year omits precisely these seven words, skipping seamlessly from ἔρδειν to θύουσι (Be, fol. 14v), and this small lacuna also appears in all subsequent direct copies of T.

These two passages have one thing in common, which links them unequivocally to Pletho: both challenge his specifically pagan version of the *prisca theologia*. In the *Laws*, Pletho asserts that his own theological views had been propounded by all previous philosophers and lawgivers, which included Zoroaster, Eumolpus, Minos, Lycourgos, Iphitos, Numa, the Brahmins of India and the Magi of Media, Teiresias, Chiron, and the "seven sages" of ancient Greece (Chilon of Sparta, Solon of Athens, Bias of Priene, Thales of Miletus, Cleoboulos of Lindos, Pittacus of Mytilene, and Myson of Chenae), as well as Pythagoras, Plato, Parmenides, Timaeus of Locris, Plutarch, Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus (*Laws* 1.2). Pletho's problem with both passages in Herodotus seems to be that they ascribed theological ideas to Solon and to the Medians of Persia, which Pletho thought blasphemous.

The first passage was the most outrageous. Solon's warning to Croesus about the unpredictability of life and the inevitability of human suffering opens with the statement that God is "jealous" or "grudging"

60 Compare how Laonikos, Pletho's pupil, began his *History* (1.1): "Realizing that the happiness of this life tends to reverse itself, being sometimes in one state and at others in its opposite, I believe it is proper to leave a fitting record of these two peoples" (trans. Kaldellis, *New Herodotus*, 3).

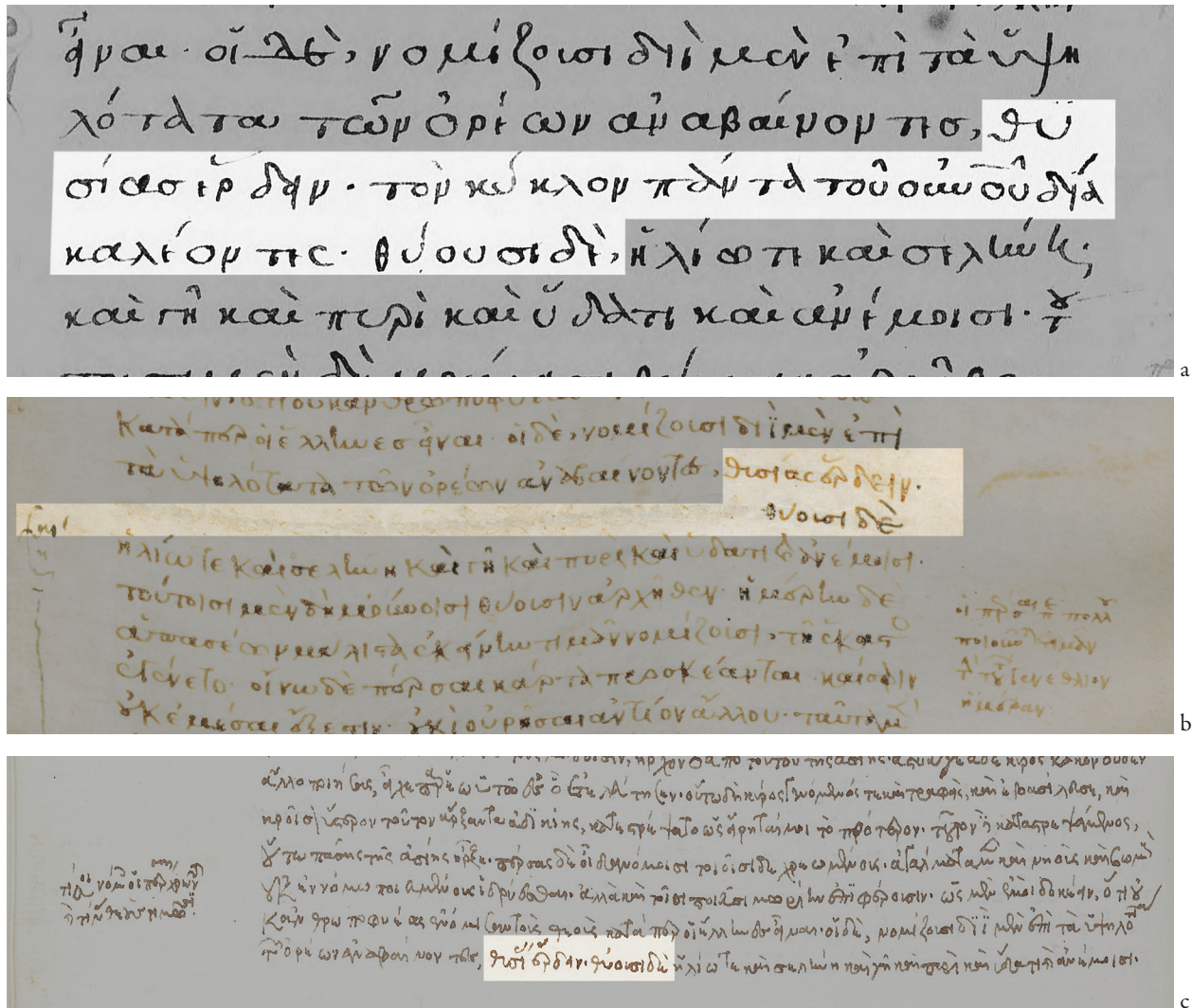


Fig. 3 Deletion at Hdt. 1.131.2: (a) Ko, fol. 50r, (b) T, fol. 33r, and (c) Be, fol. 14v. Photos courtesy of (a) the Bibliothèque nationale de France, (b) the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, and (c) the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

(φθονερός). The idea that human happiness and excellence provokes negative emotions in God, common in early classical literature,⁶¹ became deeply controversial in the later philosophical tradition. Plato's *Timaeus* attacked the notion that God is "jealous" (φθονερός), and claimed that God's goodness made it impossible for him to experience jealousy of any sort (*Ti.* 29e; cf. *Phdr.* 247a7). Plato's student Aristotle dismissed the idea of God's jealousy as one of the "lies" of the poets, as did

later Platonists like Plutarch and Plotinus.⁶² Christians took much the same view: assertions that God is utterly without jealousy (φθόνος) echo through Christian theology from Theophilus, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria to Athanasius, John Chrysostom, and

61 See Aesch. *Ag.* 903–5, 921–25, *Pers.* 361–62; and Pind. *Isth.* 7:37–40, *Ol.* 13.25–26, *Pyth.* 8.71–72, 10.21–22.

62 Arist. *Met.* 982a: "But it is not acceptable for the divine to be jealous [φθονερός]; rather, as the proverb says, the poets tell many lies"; Plut. *Mor.* 1086f3: "Jealousy [φθόνος] stands outside the chorus of the gods"; Plotinus, *Enn.* 2.9.17: "It is not holy for there to be jealousy [φθόνος] among the gods."

beyond.⁶³ Pletho and his students also saw God's total lack of jealousy as integral to his goodness and generosity, a point on which Pletho placed particular emphasis in his public speeches and in the *Laws*.⁶⁴

By Pletho's day, supernatural jealousy (φθόνος) was above all associated with the malevolence of Satan. The first Christian historian, Eusebius, had given daimonic jealousy a prominent role as a force opposed to God and associated with the triumph of evil in the world, a popular theme in the Middle Ages.⁶⁵ The qualities that Herodotus's Solon ascribed to "god" or "divinity" (τὸ θεῖον) sound, to a Byzantine ear, like those of the Devil.⁶⁶ Solon's speech to Croesus had already attracted the censure of ancient Platonists: Plutarch had accused Herodotus of slandering Solon by having him speak "blasphemous" words.⁶⁷ Rebukes continued to pour

in: the fourteenth-century statesman and philosopher Theodore Metochites criticized Herodotus for writing "foolish" and "impious" words.⁶⁸ Pletho, then, was one of many readers to object to the ideas Herodotus ascribes to Solon. What sets him apart from others is the nature of his response, to which I return below: rather than criticizing the blasphemous ideas of these ancient pagans, be it the speaker Solon or the author Herodotus, as had many Christians before him, Pletho decided to rewrite the text, removing the basis for the rebuke.

The second intervention also reflects theological concerns alien to Christian orthodoxy but crucial for Pletho. In the *Laws*, Zeus is the first and greatest God, who alone gave birth to Poseidon and then to Hera, Poseidon's wife. Only later were further deities of a lower order created, and these include Pluto and the Sun (who together created the mortal world) and the Sun's younger siblings, the planets.⁶⁹ The conflation of the created heavens with Zeus—the uncreated, self-sufficient first cause—was, for Pletho, a grave theological error, and he was doubtless unhappy to find it immediately preceding the earliest Greek descriptions of the "theogony" of the Persians and Magi (1.132.3).

Note that these interventions are not part of a broader attempt to remove *all* blasphemous ideas from Herodotus's text. Despite his painstaking editorial

63 Theophilus, *Ad Autolyicum* 2.25 (on the exegesis of the myth of Eden); Irenaeus *Adversus haereses* 3.23.6; Clem. Al. *Strom.* 7.2.7.2; Athanasius, *Contra gentes* 41 ("A good person can never feel jealousy [φθόνος] about anything"); and Chrysostom, *De virg.* 8.

64 Pletho's funeral speech for Helena Dragas (mother of the emperor), delivered in 1450, describes God as "utterly good and without any jealousy [φθόνος] at all" (ἄκρως ἀγαθὸν ὄντα τὸν θεὸν καὶ φθόνου ἔξω παντὸς, text in Lampros, *Παλαιολογία*, 3:266–80, at 277). His *Laws* 1.3 (Alexandre, *Pléthon*, 42) claim that the gods do not resent human curiosity since they created humans to be curious and willingly share knowledge of their nature, since "the divine is not grudging/jealous" (οὔτε φθονερὸν τὸ θεῖον)—for divine harmony and generosity more broadly, see *Laws* 1.5, 3.34 (Alexandre, *Pléthon*, 46, 50, 216 [= Hymn 16]). See also Bessarion, *In calumniatorem Platonis* 1.4.17 (ed. L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion als Theologe, Humanist, und Staatsmann: Funde und Forschungen*, vol. 2 [Paderborn, 1923], 54.28–30), citing Plut. *Tim.* 29c, and Gregory the Monk's funeral oration for Pletho, which repeats Pletho's phrase in the speech for Helena (PG 160:819c).

65 Wisdom of Solomon 2:24: "Death entered the world through the jealousy [φθόνος] of the Devil"; for Eusebius on "good-hating jealousy and an evil-loving *daimōn*" (μισόκαλος φθόνος καὶ φιλοπόνηρος δαίμων), see *Hist. Eccl.* 5.21.2, and cf. 8.1.6, 10.4.14.1, 10.8.2.2, and *Vit. Const.* 2.73. For the motif of Satan's envy/jealousy (φθόνος) in Byzantine literature, see M. Hinterberger, *Phthonos: Mißgunst, Neid, und Eifersucht in der byzantinischen Literatur* (Wiesbaden, 2013), 183–279.

66 Pletho, in fact, rejected such ideas as false: he believed that daemons were not evil. See here esp. the titles of the now-lost chapters of the *Laws* from book 2 listed in the index (πίναξ): 1η'. ὡς εἰσι δαίμονες, 1θ'. ὡς οὐ πονηροὶ οἱ δαίμονες εἰσιν, κ'. ἔλεγχος τῶν κατὰ δαιμόνων διαβολῶν (28: That daemons exist, 29: That daemons are not wicked, 30: Refutations of slanders against daemons (Monac. gr. 336, fol. 240v, copied in Kabakes' hand).

67 Plut. *Mor.* 857f–858a (*De Herodoti malignitate*): "Abusing the gods in the character of Solon he says . . . [citation of Hdt.

1.32.1] . . . attributing what he himself thinks about the gods to Solon, Herodotus adds malice to blasphemy." It is probable that Pletho knew of Plutarch's complaints when he made this deletion, since he certainly read Plutarch's tract at some point: his autograph excerpts from this text (including a sentence from 848a, immediately following the passage cited above) survive in Marc. gr. 517 on fols. 67r–76v; cf. A. Diller, "Pletho and Plutarch," *Scriptorium* 8 (1954): 123–27; M. Manfredini, "Giorgio Gemisto Pletone e la tradizione manoscritta di Plutarco," *AnnPisa* 2.2 (1972): 570–8181 (who shows the frequency with which Pletho's extracts from Plutarch rephrase or rearrange the text and offer unique variants); and P. A. Hansen, "Pletho and Herodotean Malice," *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-Âge grec et latin* 12 (1974): 1–10.

68 Metochites, *Carmen* 17.302–9. For a verse scholion in Plut. gr. 70.3, fol. 8r (probably left in the twelfth century by John Tzetzes), which comments critically on the theology of this passage, see J. Bértola, "Tzetzes' Verse Scholia on Thucydides and Herodotus: A Survey with New Evidence from *Laur. Plut.* 70.3," in *Τζετζικάι έρευναι*, ed. E. E. Prodi (Bologna, 2021), 335–58, at 350–53, who kindly gave me the reference.

69 For Pletho's view of the relationship between Zeus, various subordinate gods (including the "heavenly gods"), and the heavens, see *Laws* 1.5, 3.35 (with Alexandre, *Pléthon*, 56, 134, 136–38, 210, 216), and Woodhouse, *Pletho*, 346.

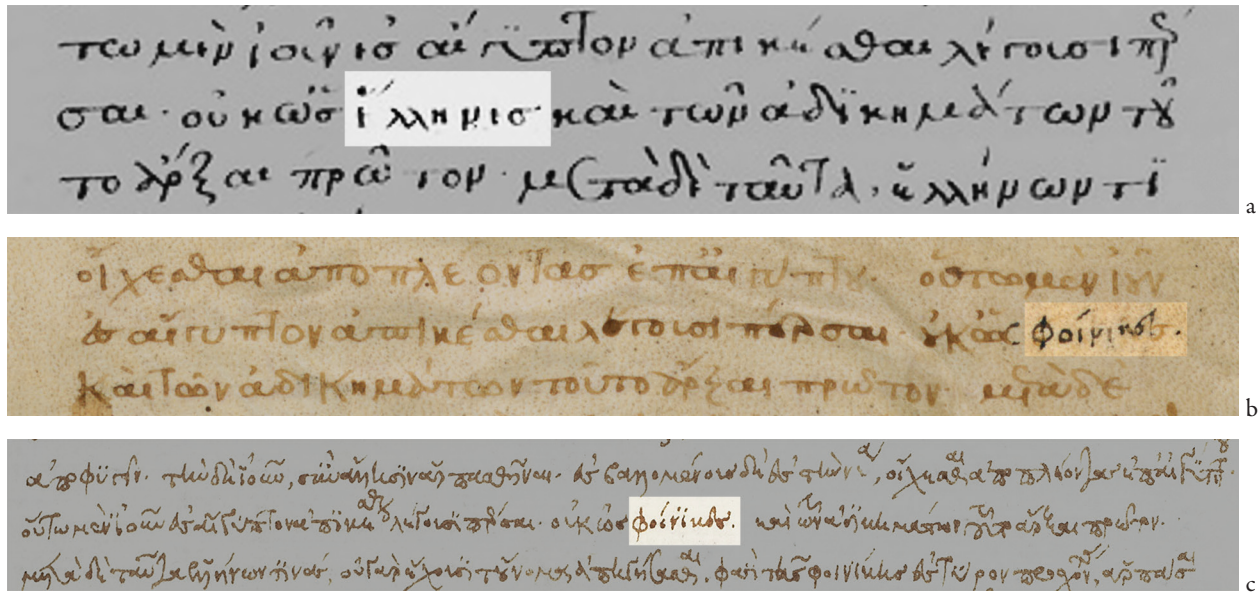


Fig. 4 Rewriting at Hdt. 1.2.1: (a) Ko, fol. 1v, (b) T, fol. 1v, and (c) Be, fol. 1r. Photos courtesy of (a) the Bibliothèque nationale de France, (b) the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, and (c) the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

work, Pletho did not delete comparable assertions of divine jealousy by other speakers elsewhere in the *Histories*: the Egyptian king Amasis and the Persian nobleman Artabanus repeat Solon's warning words about the jealousy of God, but Pletho's manuscript carries the text of their speeches undisturbed (see Hdt. 3.40, 7.10ε, 7.46), although we know that he read the later books carefully enough to notice, locate, and restore the text of two missing folia from book 4. Likewise, Herodotus's report that the Getae believed only in the existence of their own god and denied all the rest—implicitly including the Greek gods—excites no reaction from Pletho (Hdt. 4.94; T, fols. 150r–51v). Pletho, then, seems untroubled by theological error per se. His interventions come only when blasphemous ideas were ascribed to figures whom he identified as proponents of his own ancient Zoroastrian theology.⁷⁰

70 Pletho's particular and public interest in Solon, the Medes, and the Persians in the early 1430s is indicated by a funeral oration that he delivered for Cleope Malatesta (d. 1433), wife of the despot Theodore II Palaiologos. Pletho's speech begins with a maxim from "Solon the Wise," "Look to the end of life" (τὸ τοῦ βίου τέρμα ὁρᾶν), and notes Zoroaster as one of "the oldest of the sages whose name has come down to us" who revealed divine truths to "the Medes, the Persians, and the majority of the ancient peoples of Asia" (PG 160:940a).

Another change in book 1 may also be theologically motivated. In the proem, Herodotus relates the account that Persian sages give of how the Greek princess Io was abducted by Phoenician sailors. He sums up: "This, then, is how the Persians say that Io came to Egypt, not as the Greeks [say]" (Hdt. 1.2.1: οὕτω μὲν Ἰοῦν ἐς Αἴγυπτον ἀπικέσθαι λέγουσι Πέρσαι, οὐκ ὡς Ἕλληνες). This was the original reading of T, preserved in Konstantinos's 1372 copy. But today the text reads differently: the final οὐκ ὡς Ἕλληνες ("not as the Greeks [say]"), has been emended to read οὐκ ὡς Φοίνικες ("not as the Phoenicians [say]"; see Fig. 4; T, fol. 1v). Pletho's alteration is open to a banal explanation: the Persian story stands to the discredit of the Phoenicians, so we might expect it to be disputed by the Phoenicians rather than the Greeks. And the intervention also brings the sentence into harmony with a passage that follows soon after, where Herodotus says, "about Io, the Phoenicians do not agree with the Persians" (1.2.5: περὶ δὲ τῆς Ἰοῦς οὐκ ὁμολογέουσι Πέρσησι οὕτω Φοίνικες). Perhaps Pletho's self-confidence simply prevented him from seeking a perspective from which Herodotus's text makes good sense. In the original version, the ancient historian is not contrasting two nationalistic accounts of the responsibility—are Persians or Phoenicians to blame?—but contrasting the rationalizing account offered by the Persian

sages with the mythical story well-known to his Greek audience, according to which Io was transformed by Zeus into a heifer, whom Hera condemned to be stung by a gadfly into continuous wanderings.⁷¹

While misunderstanding and an overdeveloped suspicion of scribal accuracy remain possible motives, it seems likely that more is going on. Pletho's change removes the ascription of a myth to "the Greeks" that portrayed Zeus as an immoral adulterer and Hera as a jealous wife vindictively persecuting his innocent victims.⁷² The myth of Io is a "strange" myth of precisely the sort that Pletho claims to have removed from his (now-lost) edition of Homer, and his alteration of the preface of the first Greek historian may be part of an attempt to purge the ancient literary record of elements discordant with his own philosophical mythology.

Before exploring the rationale for these changes in more detail, I turn to editorial work of a very different type that puts Pletho in another light and reveals why his contemporaries considered him such an authority on ancient literature—and why his edition of Herodotus occasionally deserves the attention of modern editors.

Philological Editing

By the time Bessarion made his copy of Pletho's Herodotus in 1436, Pletho had also made a range of other textual changes. Most are subtle attempts to tackle problems of language, style, and content. They reveal Pletho as an unusually engaged reader who worked through the content and the syntax with a suspicious eye and a ready pen.

One of Pletho's subtlest fixes, also in Solon's speech to Croesus, is a conjecture printed in every twentieth-century edition of the *Histories* and the most recent edition of book 1, though never yet connected with Pletho. Shortly after the "blasphemous" comment on divine jealousy, Solon casts doubt on the desirability

of Croesus's vast wealth by praising the superiority of mediocre prosperity. All the manuscripts transmit a text that describes a man of average wealth as

... ἄτην μὲν καὶ ἐπιθυμίην οὐκ ὁμοίως δυνατὸς ἐκεῖνῳ ἐνεῖκαι, ταῦτα δὲ ἡ εὐτυχίῃ οἱ ἀπερύκει, ἄπειρος δὲ ἐστὶ, ἄνουσος, ἀπαθὴς κακῶν, εὐπαις, εὐειδής (Hdt. 1.32.6)

... unable to handle disaster and desire as well as [the rich man]; yet his good fortune protects him from such things: he is without experience, is not sick, does not suffer ills, is fortunate in his offspring, and is good-looking.

This was also the original text of T, found Konstantinos's copy of 1372 (Ko, fol. 12v). The description of the poor man as happy because he is "without experience" is conspicuously odd and editors have attempted various solutions. But today, T has a different text. On fol. 8v (depicted in Fig. 5) the original epsilon-iota (-ει-) of ἄπειρος has been changed to an eta (-η-). In medieval Greek pronunciation, the two words sounded identical, but they meant quite different things: the unsatisfying ἄπειρος (un-experienced) had been turned into ἄπηρος, a rarely attested word that means "un-maimed" or "un-harmed," derived from the adjective πηρός, a root that Herodotus uses in other compound forms.⁷³ Bessarion's 1436 copy also contains this ingenious conjecture, confirming that it had been entered in T by that date (Be, fol. 4r). Most modern editors, under the impression that this is an ancient manuscript variant, have adopted this text, which remains one of the neatest attempts to solve the crux.⁷⁴

73 See LSJ, s.v. πηρός, ἀνάπηρος, πηρώ. Herodotus uses ἐμπερος (crippled, maimed) at 1.167.1 and 1.196.3; for later uses, see, e.g., Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 5.2.40.

74 The unanimous reading of all other manuscripts (ἀπερύκει, ἄπειρος δὲ ἐστὶ, ἄνουσος) seems to have been printed by all editors until the nineteenth century, starting with the editio princeps (ed. A. Manutius, *Herodoti libri novem quibus Musarum indita sunt nomina* [Venice, 1502]). The last prominent edition to print the difficult but original reading was H. Stein's *editio minor* (*Herodoti Historiae*, 2 vols. [Berlin, 1869–1871]). The first edition I have found to adopt Pletho's conjecture ἄπηρος is that of I. Bekker (*Herodoti De bello persico libri novem* [Berlin, 1833]), followed by most subsequent editors, including R. Dietsch (*Herodoti Historiarum libri IX*, 2 vols. [Leipzig, 1860–1864]); Stein's later edition of his *editio minor* (*Herodoti Historiae*, 2 vols. [Berlin, 1884]) and his *editio maior* (*Herodotos erklärt von Heinrich Stein*,

71 For a valuable discussion of Herodotus's proem, see M. Węcowski, "The Hedgehog and the Fox: Form and Meaning in the Prologue of Herodotus," *JHS* 124 (2004): 143–64.

72 For two ancient versions of the story, see the dramatic presentation of the wretched Io in [Aesch.] *Prometheus Bound* 561–886 and the brief summary at Paus. 1.25.1. For strident criticism of precisely this kind of behavior, see Euripides' *Heracles*, in which the hero defiantly proclaims his own moral superiority to the play's callous deities, who are rebuked at various points for their stupidity, injustice, disloyalty, and jealousy (φθόνος); see in particular lines 211–12, 342, 347, 847–56, and 1304–10.

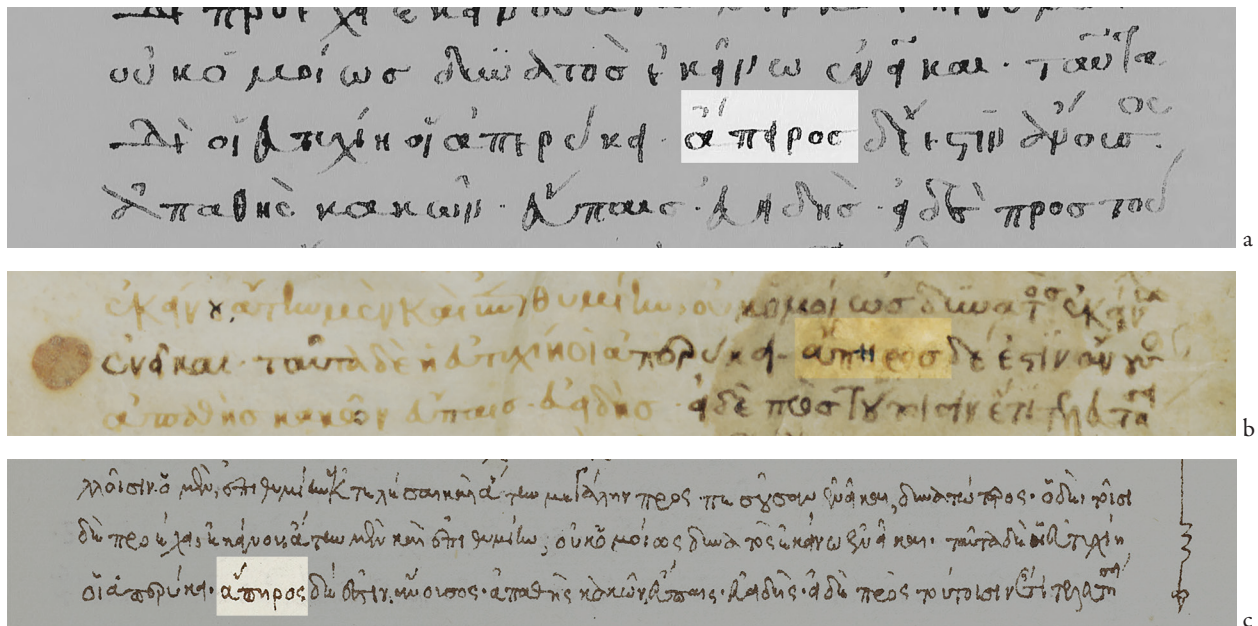


Fig. 5 Rewriting at Hdt. 1.32.6: (a) Ko, fol. 12v, (b) T, fol. 8v, and (c) Be, fol. 4r. Photos courtesy of (a) the Bibliothèque nationale de France, (b) the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, and (c) the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

Another correction attempts to sort out a minor linguistic problem at Hdt. 1.207.5, where Croesus advises the Persian king Cambyses to cross the river Araxes and fight Tomyris, queen of the Massagetae, on her own territory rather than allowing her to cross to the Persian side. Croesus's closing argument appeals to Cyrus's sense of honor:

χωρίς τε τοῦ ἀπηγγεμένου αἰσχρὸν καὶ οὐκ ἀνε-
σχετὸν Κύρον γε τὸν Καμβύσῃ γυναικὶ εἴξαντα
ὑποχωρῆσαι τῆς χώρας.

Besides what I have said, it would be shameful
and unbearable for Cyrus himself [γε], son of

Cambyses, to yield to a woman and depart from
the country.

The original text of Pletho's manuscript, as copied out by Triklines in 1318, contained a misspelling at this point, reading not Κύρον γε τὸν Καμβύσῃ (Cyrus himself, son of Cambyses) but Κύρον τε τὸν Καμβύσῃ (and Cyrus, son of Cambyses), a syntactical non sequitur (fol. 40v). Pletho spotted the problem and fixed it by deleting the offending word (τε) altogether.⁷⁵ His intervention, visible in Figure 6, is easily overlooked because it was executed using Pletho's characteristically subtle method: he deletes not only the offending particle but four letters in all (-ε τὸν). He then rewrites two of the removed letters (-ὸν-) in larger format so that the new text has no gaps and, at a cursory glance, betrays no sign of tampering. He also deleted the erroneous final accent on Κύρον. Since vast swaths of the Florentine manuscript have been traced over in a darker ink—possibly by Pletho—subtle interventions like these are

5 vols. [Berlin, 1856–1862]); C. Hude (*Herodoti Historiae*, 2 vols. [Oxford, 1908]); P.-E. Legrand (*Hérodote: Histoires, livre 1–9* [Paris, 1946–1960]); H. B. Rosén (*Herodoti Historiae*, 2 vols. [Leipzig, 1987–1997]); D. Asheri (*Erodoto: Le storie*, 9 vols. [Milan, 1977–1998]); and, most recently, C. Dewald and R. V. Munson (*Herodotus: Histories, Book I* [Cambridge, 2022])—few seeming to suspect that ἀπηγός is not T's original reading. Wilson's *Herodoti Historiae* is the only major edition since the late nineteenth century to eschew Pletho's conjecture in favor of an equally ingenious solution, namely νοῦσων for ἀνουςος. On this view, ἀνουςος (without sickness) would have originated as a gloss on the original text ἀπειρος . . . νοῦσων (without experience of sickness) and eventually replaced νοῦσων. See further Wilson, *Herodotea*, 5.

75 The particle γε has no precise English equivalent, but for ease of discussion I represent it here by the emphatic “himself.” In this passage T and most of its descendants accentuate Κύρος with the acute rather than the expected circumflex.

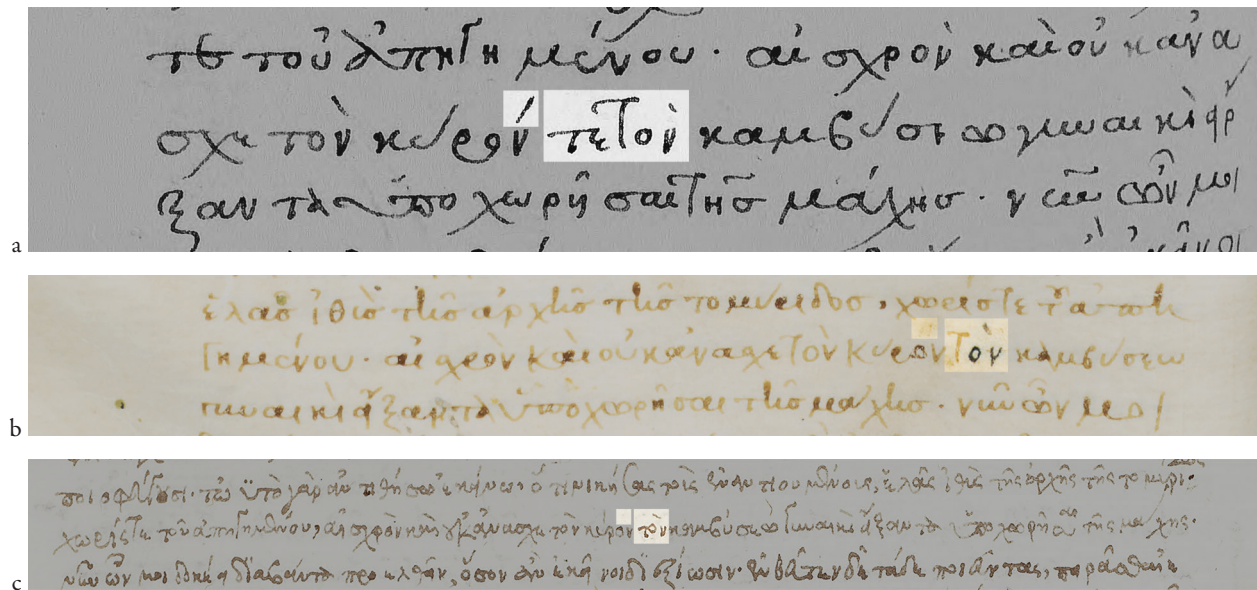


Fig. 6 Rewriting at Hdt. 1.207.5: (a) Ko, fol. 61v, (b) T, fol. fol. 40v, and (c) Be, fol. 18r. Photos courtesy of (a) the Bibliothèque nationale de France, (b) the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, and (c) the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

impossible to detect and verify through an examination of T by the naked eye:⁷⁶ they can only be revealed by comparing T with earlier copies, of whose existence Pletho could not have known. These and similar editorial interventions indicate the care with which Pletho read Herodotus, most likely in the late 1420s or early 1430s, and his keen nose for textual problems and corruptions that passed most readers by.⁷⁷

A number of linguistic corrections are more conventional, typically trying to fix problems in language or minor incoherence. At 1.27.2, most manuscripts have Bias or Pittacus visit Croesus in “Sardis,” while T and its earliest copies read “Persia” (cf. Ko, fol. 9v). Since the rest of the story unfolds in Sardis, Croesus’s capital, the corruption was unlikely to escape an engaged reader. In Pletho’s text (T, fol. 6v) today, Πέρσας has been deleted and replaced with Σάρδεις.⁷⁸ In other cases, Pletho’s

interventions tackle harder problems with more ambivalent results.⁷⁹

Later Textual Improvements (From Mid-1436 to Pletho’s Death)

Much of Pletho’s editorial work on Herodotus was in place by 1436. But he continued improving his manuscript after Bessarion copied it and left Mistra for a career in the Roman Church. Some errors lurking in the Florentine manuscript since its creation had evaded even Pletho’s beady eye. At 1.9.1, for instance, Nikolaos Triklines had written *πειρόμενον*, a misspelling he

have introduced the otherwise unattested gloss *ἐς κροΐσον* (adopted as the main text in Ap) and written above the line in Mo (see below). Pletho’s correction may simply be a better guess from the context.

⁷⁹ In Herodotus’s description of the Babylonian “marriage market” (Hdt. 1.196.3), for instance, many manuscripts (including T and its copies) have a lacuna of five words that garbles the syntax, further compounded by the corruption of *χρήν* to *χρή*, causing a shift in tenses from imperfect to present (*οὐκ ἐξήν οὐδὲ . . . ἀλλ’ . . . χρή*). Pletho fixed the latter by the addition of a small *ν* above *χρή* and attempted to repair the syntax by altering *οὐδὲ* to *δέ* (the text we find in Ψ; Be^{ac}, fol. 17r; and Mi, fol. 44v). Later, he seems to have attempted a further improvement by adding *ὁ* before *δέ* (the text we find today in T, fol. 38v, copied in the first hand into Pl Ka Da and secondarily by Bessarion into Be [see the Appendix]).

⁷⁶ The “more or less mimetic” tracing of many portions of the text in darker ink is noted by Bértola, “Epigrams,” 66, n. 15, who lists the folia on which it is found.

⁷⁷ For comparable changes, see, e.g., 1.196.1, 196.3, and 216.1, as noted in the Appendix. On the quality of Pletho’s conjectures on Plato—“talora brillianti”—compare Martinelli Tempesta, “Un nuovo testimone,” 141.

⁷⁸ It is not clear that this was done by comparison with another text. The corrector of Π, confronting the same problem as Pletho, seems to

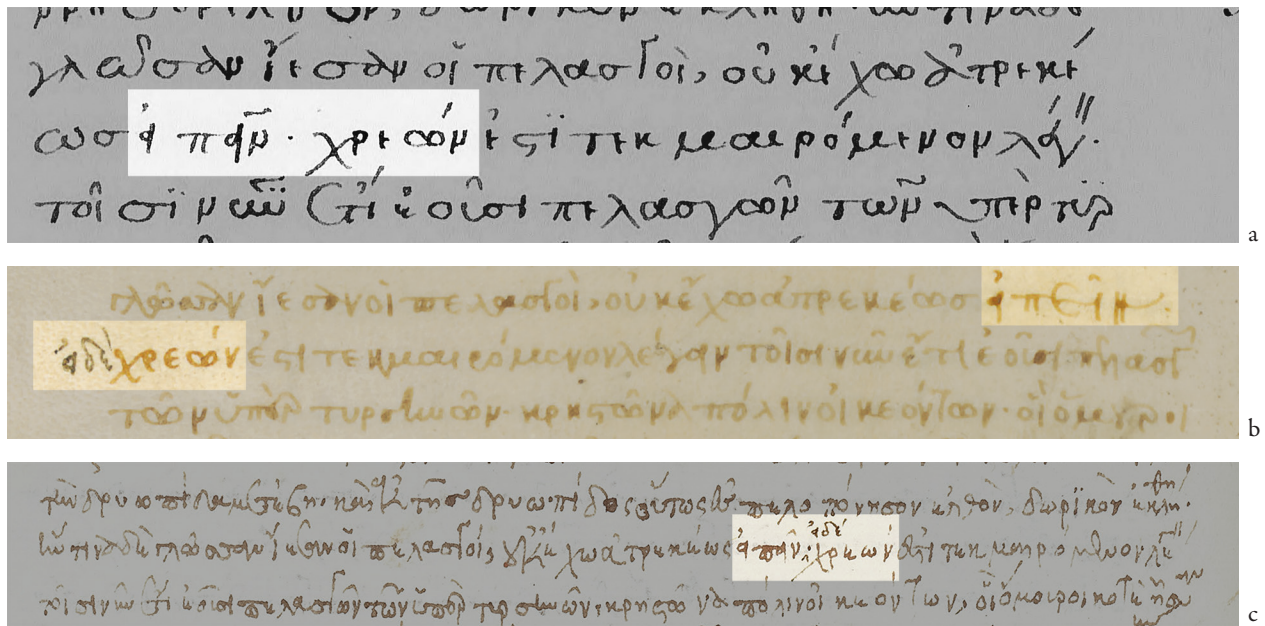


Fig. 7 Supplementing at Hdt. 1.57.1: (a) Ko, fol. 20r, (b) T, fol. 13v, and (c) Be, fol. 6v. Photos courtesy of (a) the Bibliothèque nationale de France, (b) the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, and (c) the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana.

probably found in his source and that had been copied faithfully by Konstantinos (Ko, fol. 4r) and Bessarion (Be, fol. 3r). By the time Kritoboulos made his copy, however, it seems the spelling has been corrected to *πειρώμενον* (Mi, fol. 4v), which is what we find in all subsequent copies and in T (fol. 3r) today.⁸⁰ The confusion of omicron and omega was easy to miss, since the vowels sounded identical in medieval Greek, but it seems that Pletho continued reading Herodotus and correcting minor points of orthography.

In a few cases, these late corrections must be derived from another copy of the *Histories*. At some point after 1436, Pletho filled in a large chunk of missing text in the fourth book of the *Histories* (4.155.1–163.2) which had been caused by two folia falling out of the manuscript more than half a century earlier.⁸¹ Pletho carefully copied the text onto two new folia,

though here he made no effort to imitate the handwriting style of the surrounding pages. The date of the supplement remains unclear, but it was certainly done after Bessarion made his copy in 1436, since Be, like Konstantinos's copy of 1372 and other early copies (including Am and the copies of Ψ), exhibits precisely the same lacuna (see the Appendix under Tδ). Bessarion also filled the corresponding lacuna in his own copy (Be), but his source was a manuscript from a different textual tradition than that used by Pletho.⁸²

Another correction may also be drawn from comparing T with another manuscript. In Herodotus's description of the Pelasgian language (Hdt. 1.57.1), T and its early copies omitted the first two words of the sentence *εἰ δὲ χρεὸν ἐστὶ τεκμαιρόμενον λέγειν . . .* (If it is necessary to speak from conjecture . . .).⁸³ As shown in Fig. 7, the missing words (*εἰ δὲ*) are added to the margin of the Florentine manuscript (T, fol. 13v, whence they

80 As can be seen in the Appendix, the copyist of Am had also normalized the spelling, and it seems likely that it was glossed with a correction in Ψ, with the original only being copied by the scribe of Pa, who tends to stick closest to the uncorrected text of T.

81 For identification of Pletho's hand, see Bianconi, "La biblioteca," 403–5. Note, however, that these folia were lost much earlier than Bessarion's copy (contrast Bianconi, "L'Erodoto," 68–69); see also Ellis, "Recentiores."

82 Nor was Pletho's supplement to T copied from Bessarion's supplementary folio in Be at some point between May and December 1436 (a theory suggested by Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits*, 108, 118, and most recently explored by Bianconi, "L'Erodoto," 68–69, 80), as can be seen from the textual evidence in the Appendix.

83 T and copies also read *χρεών* for *χρεόν* (see the Appendix).

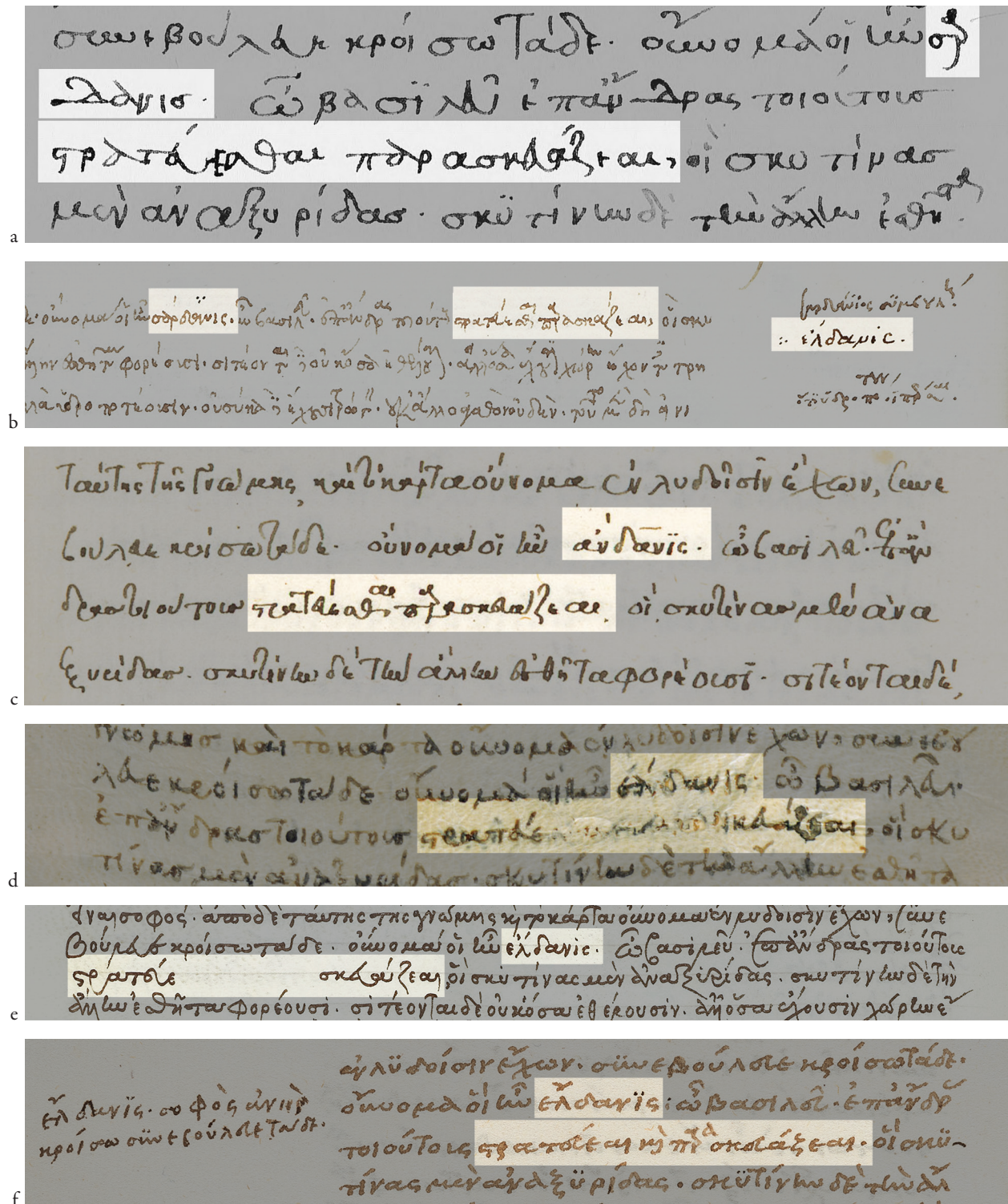


Fig. 8 Searching for Eldanis at Hdt. 1.71.2: (a) Ko, fol. 27r, (b) Be, fol. 9r, (c) Mi, fol. 23r, (d) T, fol. 18r, (e) Pl, fol. 9v, and (f) Ka, fol. 24av.14–15. Photos courtesy of (a) the Bibliothèque nationale de France, (b, e) the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, (c, d) the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, and (f) the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

were later copied over by Bessarion, inserted between the lines of Be), and they are also found in the copy of T made by Kritoboulos and all other copies made after Pletho's death.

Other passages take us into more puzzling corners of Pletho's editorial workshop. In one place, Pletho seems to have intervened multiple times to change a proper name, illustrated in Figure 8. The person in question is a minor figure who advises Croesus against his ill-starred campaign against the Persians (Hdt. 1.71.2). All manuscripts of Herodotus, aside from T and its copies, report the name of this Lydian as Sandanis (Σάνδανις), a theophoric name from the ancient Lydian god Sandon.⁸⁴ T, by contrast, originally gave the name as Sardanis (Σάρδανις, the reading of Ko, fol. 27r), and this is what the text still read in 1436 when Bessarion copied it ("Sardanis" stands in the main text of Be, fol. 9r). Today, however, T clearly reads "Eldanis" (fol. 18r: Ἐλδανις), and this reading was in place in 1469, when T was copied by Plousiadenos (Pl, fol. 9v), and in 1480, when it was copied by Kabakes (Ka, fol. 24av).

Pletho, like several modern editors, clearly thought that the passage mentioning Sandanis was problematic. But he altered it on more than one occasion. In Mi—Kritoboulos's copy made at some point between 1436 and the early 1450s—we find neither the original reading "Sardanis" nor the later reading "Eldanis" but rather "Andanis" (Mi, fol. 23r: Ἀνδανις). Other evidence suggests that this difference is neither Kritoboulos's misreading nor a straightforward correction taken from another manuscript (whence we might expect Σάνδανις) but represents an intermediary stage in the process of "correction." While making his last erasure—presumably while deleting "Andanis" in order to change it to "Eldanis"—Pletho mangled the text of the words in the following line just beneath the contested name. The line below had originally read στρατεύεσθαι παρασκευάζει, and these words are found in all copies made before 1469 (including those made by Bessarion and Kritoboulos). Today, however, they can no longer be made out in T, and by 1469 they were already illegible: Plousiadenos simply left a space in his copy (Pl, fol. 9v: στρατεύε . . . σκευάζει), and in 1480, Kabakes filled the gap with a guess (Ka, fol. 24av: στρατεύει καὶ παρασκευάζει).⁸⁵

These progressive alterations are baffling. Pletho would certainly have read the first book of Herodotus's *Histories* with great interest, since it mentions many famous figures, including most of the "seven sages" of archaic Greece: Bias of Prene (1.27.2), Pittacus of Mytilene (1.27.2), Solon of Athens (1.29–33), Lycurgus of Sparta (1.55–56), Chilon of Sparta (1.59.2), Thales of Miletus (1.70.2), as well as the Magi of Media (e.g., 1.107–8, 1.132.3), all of whom appear in Pletho's list of ancient philosophers who expounded his own "Zoroastrian" doctrine. The presence of another sage, "Sardanis," who was entirely unknown in later antiquity, is an intriguing blank spot. Many modern scholars view this clause in Herodotus's text as an interpolation, albeit for reasons that seem not to have concerned Pletho.⁸⁶

Given Pletho's confidence in his own ability to reconstruct vast swaths of intellectual history without—or even in spite of—all written evidence, it would be no stranger if he thought he could reconstruct a proper name corrupted by careless scribes. Interestingly, the latest version of the text in T (Ἐλδανις) has been copied into the margins of Be as a variant on the older text (Σάρδανις) that Bessarion had copied in 1436. Although such a small sample allows no certainty, both the ink and the script look similar to those used by Plousiadenos in the copy he made in Rome in 1469 for Bessarion (see above, Fig. 8). Alongside a handful of other marginal variants that appear as later marginal additions to both T and Be (but are incorporated into the main text in Mi), this marginal variant suggests that Plousiadenos and perhaps Bessarion went through

second alteration to these lines are the work of Pletho. While it cannot be definitively shown that his students did not continue his unusual editorial work, the following points support this view: (a) we know that Pletho was still working on the manuscript in the period between 1436 and his death, since he restored the bifolium during this period; (b) he owned the codex and was in the habit of changing its text; (c) the final alteration (from Ἀνδανις to Ἐλδανις) moves the reading *away* from that found in the rest of the manuscript tradition and toward an otherwise unattested reading; and (d) such changes fit his idiosyncratic editorial profile and his specific interest in this name.

⁸⁴ The clause with the name (σύννομά οἱ ἦν Σάνδανις) is unusual in its lack of connectors and its placement (between the introduction of the speaker and his first word of direct speech) and is missing from a late witness (Mo). Modern scholars and editors have either transposed it to a different point in the sentence (so Wilson, following Legrand's suggestion) or deleted it as an interpolation (so Legrand, following Jacoby's suggestion). For discussion and references, see Wilson, *Herodotea*, 10.

⁸⁴ See Asheri, *Erodoto*, 313.

⁸⁵ My dating of Kritoboulos's copy (Mi) to the period before Pletho's death relies on the assumption that both the first and the

T carefully with an eye for the improvements that Pletho had made to the text since 1436 and copied them across into Bessarion's personal copy (Be), sometimes entering them unobtrusively between the lines or in the margins, as in the case of "Eldanis" (so also 1.57.1, 1.129.1, 1.196.3), sometimes copying Pletho's text on top of a neat erasure (so 1.27.2).⁸⁷

Pletho's Motivations for Theological Editing: Forgers, Philologists, Fantasists

As we have seen, two, possibly three textual interventions—at Hdt. 1.32.1, 1.131.2, and probably 1.2.1—are driven by theological concerns, since they rid Herodotus's text of statements that directly contradict Pletho's own claims about the theology of the ancient Persians and Solon. What did Pletho think he was achieving by these alterations? As attempts to "rewrite" history they seem unsystematic. We cannot exclude the possibility that Pletho also rewrote other manuscripts of Herodotus when he encountered them. But if he did so, those other edited texts have not come to light.

Pletho's activities can, I think, be fruitfully contextualized in the long history of literary forgery by learned scholars.⁸⁸ But the concept of forgery can be a blunt tool with which to approach the intentions and beliefs that lead to the activities to which it refers. "Forgery" sits alongside "deception" in implicit opposition to notions of "authenticity" and "honesty." But these latter ideas are anything but self-evident and cross-cultural, especially when it comes to the attempt to reconstitute the original version of an ancient

text—and particularly when these survive in scores of obviously corrupted copies.⁸⁹

In this section, I consider the possibility that Pletho viewed his alterations to Herodotus as some sort of correction. Pletho was clearly all too aware that many ancient Greek writings contradicted his claim that his own philosophy had been taught in identical form by all great thinkers from Zoroaster onward, including Solon, the Zoroastrian Magi and Persians, and Plato.⁹⁰ This raw contradiction is at the root of his alterations to the manuscripts themselves. Pletho's intellectual response may have been to distrust the evidence of the manuscripts. Such a position would not be as unusual as it might seem today. Pletho probably knew the ancient tradition, preserved in Diogenes Laertius, that Plato's writings had suffered interpolations and corruptions and had been marked up by editors accordingly.⁹¹

Since various critical marks are found in [Plato's] works, let us say something about them here. . . . The dotted *diple* (≧) indicates the corrections of certain editors; the dotted *obelus* (÷), passages suspected for no good reason; the dotted reversed sigma (Ϸ), repetitions and possible transpositions . . . the asterisk (*), an agreement of doctrine; and the *obelus* (–), a spurious passage.⁹²

87 The fact that Plousiadenos does not use Be to supplement unreadable spaces in T (compare Pl, fol. 9v [στρατεύε . . . σκευάζει], with Be, fol. 9r [στρατεύεσθαι παρασκευάζει]) suggests that (1) the primary model for Pl was not Be but T (an impression confirmed by the fact that Pl follows T [i.e., Pletho's bifolium] rather than Be [i.e., Bessarion's added folio] at 4.155.2–163.2), and (2) the copying of Pletho's late alterations into Bessarion's personal copy was not done systematically by Plousiadenos in 1469 as he copied T.

88 For orientations, see W. Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum: Ein Versuch ihrer Deutung* (Munich, 1971); B. D. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (New York, 2013); A. Grafton, *Forgers and Critics: Creativity and Duplicity in Western Scholarship*, new ed. (Princeton, 2019); and C. Michel and M. Friedrich, "Fakes and Forgeries of Written Artefacts: An Introduction," in *Fakes and Forgeries of Written Artefacts from Ancient Mesopotamia to Modern China*, ed. C. Michel and M. Friedrich (Berlin, 2020), 1–22.

89 For valuable attempts to pin down the concepts of *Fälschung* and *Verfälschung*—and to distinguish them from misattribution, correction, and stylistic improvement—see Speyer, *Die literarische Fälschung*, 13–15, 18, as well as the excellent discussion in J. E. G. Zetzel, *Marginal Scholarship and Textual Deviance: The Commentarium Cornuti and the Early Scholia on Perseus* (London, 2005), 3, 155–60.

90 For the theologically motivated interventions in Plato, see Pagani, "Damnata verba."

91 It is clear that Pletho knew and had access to the writings of Diogenes Laertius at some point since a copy of *Lives* 2.5 (the life of Socrates) in Pletho's hand is preserved in Marc. gr. Z. 517 (coll. 886), fols. 110r–15v.

92 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 3.65–66 (trans. Mensch): ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ σημειᾷ τινα τοῖς βιβλίοις αὐτοῦ παρατίθενται, φέρε καὶ περὶ τούτων τι εἶπωμεν. . . διπλῇ περιεστιγμένη πρὸς τὰς ἐνίων διορθώσεις· ὀβελὸς περιεστιγμένος πρὸς τὰς εἰκαίου ἀθετήσεις· ἀντίστιγμα περιεστιγμένον πρὸς τὰς διττάς χρήσεις καὶ μεταθέσεις τῶν γραφῶν. . . ἀστερίσκος πρὸς τὴν συμφωνίαν τῶν δογμάτων· ὀβελὸς πρὸς τὴν ἀθέτησιν. For the sparse but suggestive evidence of ancient Alexandrian philological scholarship on Plato, see F. Schironi, "Plato at Alexandria: Aristophanes, Aristarchus, and the 'Philological Tradition' of a Philosopher," *CQ* 55.2 (2005): 423–34. For an overview of the obelus in ancient and medieval textual and doctrinal criticism, see I. Van Renswoude, "The

The signs that Diogenes Laertius describes had a long history. Originally developed by the scholars of Hellenistic Alexandria to annotate the Homeric poems, they became an important part of the toolkit of textual scholars. In Diogenes' day, these signs were being reapplied to scholarship on the Hebrew Bible by his Christian contemporary Origen, who used them in his monumental "Hexapla," a version of the Bible consisting of six parallel columns containing the Hebrew text, a transcription of the Hebrew into Greek characters, and four different Greek translations. A wide array of critical symbols were used to flag up discrepancies between the different versions to provide scholars with the evidence they needed to identify the authentic text of scripture.⁹³

Pletho seems to have imagined himself in this kind of editorial tradition. In describing what we might call a bowdlerized version of Homer, he speaks of a text of the *Iliad* that has been "corrected" (διώρθωται) through the expurgation (ἐξαιρέσει) of its most irrational myths. It may seem strange to find Pletho describing sweeping deletions—probably like those we saw at Hdt. 1.131 or in the Myth of Er in his manuscripts of Plato's *Republic*—using the language of textual criticism and borrowing technical terms from the scholars of ancient Alexandria.⁹⁴ Zenodotos of Ephesos, head of the Library in Alexandria in the early third century BCE, is traditionally remembered as the first "editor" (διορθωτής) of Homer and used the obelus to mark editorial deletions (ἀθέτησις).⁹⁵ The Homeric

tradition handed Pletho a good excuse to take a free hand in establishing an "original" text. In his introduction to Homer, Pletho states that Homer's poems were performed orally by bards until the time when they were collected and ordered by the Athenian tyrant Peisistratos in the sixth century BCE. In this interval, "due to their unwritten nature, some things were distorted and others were added by the bards within a short space of time; hence we have corrected the poems by the deletion of its most absurd myths."⁹⁶

But if the "Homeric question" provided a scholarly justification for creative editing of the Homeric poems, the same was not true for Plato and Herodotus, whose works had no "oral" phase of circulation. Could Pletho seriously have viewed his rewriting of these texts in similar terms as some sort of "correction"? I think so. To understand why, it is worth diving into the theories of scriptural falsification that saturated medieval Christian, Jewish, and Islamic scholarship—as well as the real forgeries that not infrequently lay behind them.

The theory that the Jews had tampered with scripture in order to deceive Christians was standard fare in ancient and medieval Christian thought. It appears already in the writings of early Christian apologists like Justin Martyr, serious textual scholars like Origen, and prominent church fathers like John Chrysostom.⁹⁷ At the turn of the fifth century, Rufinus claimed that Origen had created the Hexapla precisely in order to refute the biblical falsifications of Jews and heretics. Rufinus also saw conspiratorial forgeries in more recent works: when he came to translate the works of his hero Origen into Latin, he silently omitted long passages of theologically dubious material on the basis that the Greek manuscripts had been interpolated by

Censor's Rod: Textual Criticism, Judgement, and Canon Formation in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages," in *The Annotated Book in the Early Middle Ages: Practices of Reading and Writing*, ed. I. Van Renswoude and M. Teeuwen (Turnhout, 2017), 55–95, and E. Steinová, *Notam superponere studui: The Use of Annotation Symbols in the Early Middle Ages* (Turnhout, 2019), 216–17.

93 For Alexandrian textual criticism on Homer, see F. Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians: Aristarchus of Samothrace on the Iliad* (Ann Arbor, 2018), esp. 49–75 on the critical signs used by Alexandrian grammarians like Aristarchus. For Origen's use of Alexandrian text-critical methods and *termini technici* (including describing his own work as διόρθωσις), see B. Neuschäfer, *Origines als Philologe*, vol. 1 (Basel, 1987), 122–38.

94 For Pletho's words, as published by Pontani, see below, n. 96. For the Alexandrian terminology (and its use in Alexandrian Jewish textual criticism of the Bible), see M. R. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Cambridge, 2011), 21.

95 On the original sense of *athetesis*—marking up a verse as spurious while leaving it in place—and for secondary literature on Zenodotos's

editorial work, see R. Nünlist, *The Ancient Critic at Work: Terms and Concepts of Literary Criticism in Greek Scholia* (Cambridge, 2009), 16, n. 57.

96 Pletho, *De Homero* 1 (in Pontani, "L'Homère," 44): ὅθεν καὶ εἰκὸς συχρὰ ἐν τῷ μεταξὺ χρόνῳ οὐκ ὀλίγω γενομένῳ ὑπὸ τῶν βασιλευδῶν διὰ τὸ ἀγραφὸν τὰ μὲν διαστραφῆναι, τὰ δὲ προστεθῆναι, δι' ἃ δὴ καὶ διορθώσθαι ὑφ' ἡμῶν ἐξαιρέσει τῶν ἀτοπωτάτων μύθων.

97 See, for instance, Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 71.2, 72.1–4, who talks about recent Jewish deletion (περικοπή, περικόπτω, ἀφαιρέω, περαιορέω) in copies of the Hebrew scriptures. For an overview of theories about Jewish scriptural falsification from Christian antiquity to the Middle Ages, see I. M. Resnick, "The Falsification of Scripture and Medieval Christian and Jewish Polemics," *Medieval Encounters* 2.3 (1996): 344–80, at 353–64, 371–80.

Origen's enemies to tar him with heresy—a practice that led Rufinus into a bitter conflict with Origen's other prominent Latin translator, his erstwhile friend Jerome of Stridon.⁹⁸ The charge of scriptural falsification proved adaptable. The fifth-century ecclesiastical historian Socrates accused the emperor Julian (an apostate who rejected Christianity for philosophical paganism) of falsifying scripture as part of his campaign against Christianity.⁹⁹ In the later Middle Ages, Jewish writers turned the tables on their Christian opponents by accusing them of tampering with scripture. The claim's traction was increased by the chaotic diversity of biblical texts that circulated among Greek- and Latin-speaking Christians. Early Islamic scholars, in turn, accused both Jews and Christians of falsifying parts of the Bible to obfuscate scriptural references to the Prophet Muhammed.¹⁰⁰

It is possible that a specifically pagan version of such theories undergirded Pletho's practice of purging his books of "blasphemy" ascribed to ancient pagan philosophers. Pletho had a flare for subverting Christian historical claims and theological dogmas to produce his own pagan equivalent. Pletho, too, knew a supreme trio of gods, though it was not the Christian Trinity (Father–Son–Holy Spirit) but a Hellenic one: Zeus–Poseidon–Hera.¹⁰¹ Likewise, the structure of

Pletho's "ancient theology" was, from a Christian perspective, entirely conventional. Greco-Jewish philosophers of antiquity had turned the tables on their Greek counterparts by claiming that Moses was the ultimate source of Greek wisdom.¹⁰² Pletho simply turned them back again by changing the lineup and supplanting the Hebrew Moses with the Persian Zoroaster as the fountainhead of philosophy. When it came to the question of falsifying ancient texts, Pletho may have taken the standard interconfessional polemics of his day and applied them to what he had come to view as his own literary tradition: works written by and about his ancient pagan sages. The notion of monastic scribes as the corruptors of ancient wisdom could have been one of Pletho's answers to the struggle that dogs most religious claims that the truth is to be found in a corpus of consultable literature.

It is a striking fact that many of the great forgery hunters were accomplished forgers in their own right. Pletho is no exception. We know that he showed particular interest in the question of forgeries by Latin Christian in the late 1430s, when he attended the Council of Ferrara-Florence.¹⁰³ According to the account given by Silvestros Syropoulos, Pletho only once addressed the council at any length and his subject on that occasion was the authenticity of the *filioque* clause, found in the Latin text of the Nicene Creed but not in the Greek version.¹⁰⁴ Pletho, who by this time had already rewritten the text of Herodotus to fit his own theological predilections, argued that the disputed clause was a forgery by the Latins. He used an ingenious argument from silence: if the Latin text were genuine, then it would have been cited as the crowning evidence by advocates of the trinitarian position it supported. The fact that theologians like Thomas Aquinas never

98 For an overview of the Origenist controversy and its influence on later medieval views of textual authenticity, see van Renswoude, "Censor's Rod," 566–73.

99 See Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.

100 For Islamic claims—already in the Quran—that Christians and Jews had obscured references to Muhammad, see J.-M. Gandeul and R. Caspar, "Textes de la tradition musulmane concernant le *tahrif* (falsification) des écritures," *Islamochristiana* 6 (1980): 61–104; H. Lazarus-Yaffe, *Intertwined Worlds: Medieval Islam and Bible Criticism* (Princeton, 1992), 75–110; and G. S. Reynolds, "On the Qur'anic Accusation of Scriptural Falsification (*tahrif*) and Christian Anti-Jewish Polemic," *JAOS* 130.2 (2010): 189–202. For Jewish accusations of Christian biblical falsification, see J. Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Ithaca, 1982), 194, and Resnick, "Falsification," 377. For extended Christian responses to Islamic allegations of scriptural falsification by Jews and Christians, see, e.g., Peter of Cluny's *Contra sectam Saracenorum* 58–77. The clear influence of Jewish astronomical works on Pletho's astronomical tables seems to attest his familiarity with Jewish scholarship, even if the precise sources are not clear; see A. Thion and R. Mercier, *Georges Gémiste Pléthon: Manuel d'astronomie* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1998), 250–62, 275.

101 For Pletho's repurposing of trinitarian ideas and of the language of the procession of the Holy Spirit—themselves, of course, Neoplatonic in origin—see Woodhouse, *Pletho*, 346.

102 See above, n. 11, for some prominent examples. The best evidence for pre-Christian genealogies of philosophy and theology is preserved in the prologue of Diogenes Laertius who, incidentally, at pr.9, notes that "some" (ἐνίοι) say that the Jews are the followers of the Persian Magi.

103 For Pletho's participation in the council and Emperor John VIII's consultation of Pletho at earlier phases (including ca. 1427 in Mistra), see Silvestros Syropoulos's comments in V. Laurent, *Les "Mémoires" du Grand Ecclésiarque de l'Église de Constantinople Sylvestre Syropoulos sur le concile de Florence (1438–1439)* (Paris, 1971), 312; Woodhouse, *Pletho*, 119–88; and Berger, "Pletho."

104 For Pletho's general silence in the council, see his explanation in a letter to Bessarion printed in Alexandre, *Pléthon*, 312, appendix VIII).

mentioned the clause and defended their position only by convoluted logic demonstrates that it was a subsequent interpolation.¹⁰⁵

This type of argument had a long history and an illustrious afterlife.¹⁰⁶ In the following generations, many humanists cultivated a reputation for unmasking fakes. In 1440, Lorenzo Valla, who later translated Herodotus into Latin at Bessarion's instigation, wrote a declamation that returned to the longstanding argument that the so-called *Donation of Constantine* was a forgery. What was new in Valla's speech was not his distrust of the *Donation* but the philological arguments he marshaled.¹⁰⁷ A generation later, Erasmus attacked the authenticity of correspondence between Paul and Seneca as well as the writings ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite. In the early seventeenth century, Joseph Scaliger claimed that the New Testament itself had suffered interpolation in at least fifty places.¹⁰⁸ Strikingly, both Erasmus and Scaliger created forgeries of their own.¹⁰⁹

Debates on forgery have a tendency to flare up along identitarian lines in moments where history becomes political. In medieval Europe, Jews and Christians took very different positions on the authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum*, a profession of the divinity of Jesus found in the works of Josephus, a first-century priest and Pharisee from Jerusalem. The absence of the *Testimonium* in the Jewish text *Sefer Yosippon*—long mistakenly viewed as the Hebrew original of Josephus's *Jewish War*—elicited different explanations from Christians and Jews:¹¹⁰ the former tended

to claim that the *Testimonium* had been maliciously deleted by the Jews, while the latter tended to view it as a Christian interpolation.¹¹¹ In the Reformation, the issue proved just as divisive, but this time it was Catholics and Protestants who lined up on opposite sides. Lutherans like Lucas Osiander and Scaliger and Calvinists like Casaubon dismissed the *Testimonium* as a forgery while Cardinal Baronius defended its authenticity.¹¹²

In antiquity, too, forgery was deeply intertwined with identitarian polemic. Christian forgery was a favorite topic of Porphyry, a Neoplatonic philosopher of the third century whom Pletho admired deeply. Porphyry used linguistic arguments to unmask the biblical Book of Daniel as a post-factum work of history dishonestly purporting to “prophecy” events that lay in the past. His suspicious acumen also ripped the veil off a whole range of pseudepigrapha, including philosophical texts ascribed to Zoroaster (dismissed as the attempts of later sectarians to make their own dogmas sound ancient) and the *Hermetic Corpus*.¹¹³ And, when not exposing the forgeries of his enemies,¹¹⁴ Porphyry kept himself busy “correcting” those ancient texts that he himself respected. As he says in the preface to the *Philosophy from Oracles*, he never “added or removed” anything from the sense of the oracles he collected—except, that is, when he “corrected” (διώρθωσα) incorrect phrases, or introduced greater clarity, or fixed the meter, or removed

105 Syropoulos's account is printed in Laurent, *Mémoires*, 330–32.

106 For similar argumentation in earlier medieval debates on forgery, see Resnik, “Falsification,” 359, 366, discussing Bede and Gilbert Crispin's *Disputation of a Jew and a Christian*.

107 See the introduction to G. W. Bowersock, trans., *Lorenzo Valla: On the Donation of Constantine* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), vi–xiii.

108 On Erasmus and Valla on biblical pseudepigrapha, see A. Whealey, *Josephus on Jesus: The Testimonium Flavianum Controversy from Late Antiquity to Modern Times* (New York, 2003), 73–74; on Scaliger's comments on interpolation in the New Testament, preserved in his *Table Talk*, see C. P. E. Nothaft, “Josephus and New Testament Chronology in the Work of Joseph Scaliger,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 23.3, *The Reception of Josephus in the Early Modern Period*, ed. M. Goodman and J. Weinberg (2016): 246–51, at 246–47. See also Grafton, *Forgers*, for a *longue durée* account of the scholarly preoccupation with forgery.

109 See Grafton, *Forgers*, 31, 43–44.

110 On the relationship of the *Yosippon* to the Christian Latin texts of Josephus, see N. Zeldes, *Reading Jewish History in the*

Renaissance: Christians, Jews, and the Hebrew Sefer Josippon (Lanham, MD, 2020).

111 For Christian claims to have seen Hebrew manuscripts in which the Jewish deletion of the *Testimonium* was still visible—from Gerald of Wales (twelfth century) to Baronius (sixteenth century)—see Whealey, *Josephus*, 61, 87, and (for the rejection of the *Testimonium* by Jewish scholars), 65, 100.

112 On the debate over the *Testimonium* in the Reformation, see Whealey, *Josephus*, 53–119, and Nothaft, “Josephus,” 246–47.

113 For Porphyry's unmasking of forgeries, see Grafton, *Forgers*, 78–79, 84–87, 94–96. For his views on Daniel, see *Contra Christianos*, fr. 43 (Harnack), with P. M. Casey, “Porphyry and the Origin of the Book of Daniel,” *JTS* 27.1 (1976): 15–33. On Porphyry's writings against books fraudulently ascribed to Zoroaster, see his *Life of Plotinus* 16. His arguments that the *Hermetic Corpus* is a forgery survive only in the refutation written by a later Platonist, Iamblichus (*De mysteriis* 8.4).

114 For the tendency of scholars to bring their sharpest and most skeptical faculties to bear on texts whose implications they dislike for entirely different reasons, see Grafton, *Forgers*, 92–93.

anything that did not suit the text's purpose.¹¹⁵ Note how neatly the license Porphyry grants himself here fits with the editorial activities we find in Pletho.

Theories of interpolation and forgery coursed through the veins of ancient and medieval scholarship, ranging from vague conspiratorial claims to subtly argued philology. New political contexts were fertile soil for adaption. Pletho, too, broke with the dominant intellectual schemes of his time and place—orthodox Christianity—and dreamed of theological and political reforms that would bring his contemporaries back to the glorious ideas of the ancients. If he did view his textual interventions as an attempt to fix errors introduced by Christian scribes, he might have had many sources of inspiration. As an ancient Neoplatonist with a flare for sniffing out Christian fakes, Porphyry is an obvious paradigm. If Pletho really did have close contact with a Jewish scholar called Elissaios in the court of the Ottoman sultan, as Scholarios claims, then he was probably aware of Jewish and Muslim discourses on Christian scriptural forgery.¹¹⁶

The Christian tradition, of course, contained plenty to inspire distrust. Since the time of Origen, some Christian scholars had explicitly defended the use of active deception in the service of a higher good.¹¹⁷ Such voices did not go unopposed, but, as Bart Ehrman has shown, some notion of pious forgery seems to have inspired many early Christian scribes to forge texts, and even rewrite Christian scripture, so as to lend authority to their own ideas.¹¹⁸ The practice did not end in late

antiquity. Pletho himself worked in detail on one particularly high-profile case of great cultural import, the filioque clause, in the early fifteenth century. Pletho's own editorial activities, I suggest, may be another manifestation of the medieval paranoia about literary deceit that had been co-produced by pagan, Christian, Jewish, and Islamic scholars for millennia.¹¹⁹ These were post-truth times in which all parties could suspect, often with good reason, that almost any authoritative text had been copied by untrustworthy scribes who were not only ignorant and incompetent but also actively seeking to corrupt the truth.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing how the manuscript tradition of Herodotus might have shaken a scholar's confidence in the text. Pletho may have been aware that manuscripts of the *Histories* circulating in his day presented the text of book 1 in shorter and longer recensions. Modern scholars have traced these disconcertingly different versions to the activities of a medieval editor who went through the first book and carefully stripped out many of its "digressions" to produce a more streamlined narrative, though one that lacked some of the passages that most interested later readers, including, for instance, Croesus's testing of the oracles and other oracle stories of early Athens and Sparta.¹²⁰ The autograph version produced by this unknown editor does not survive. But the text they produced was widely copied and is the source of the many codices conventionally referred to as the "Roman family" of manuscripts of Herodotus. The situation was, however, further complicated by the activities of scholars who unwittingly acquired the abridged version and were dismayed to realize that they were missing important passages. Although T, that is, Pletho's text, generally follows the Roman family in book 1, it descends from a text that had

115 Euseb. *Praep. evang.* 4.5.7.1: "And I swear by the gods that I have not added nor taken away from the sense of the oracles, except when I have corrected some mistaken word, or changed something to make it more clear, or filled out the meter when it was wanting, or crossed out something that did not fit the theme" (ἐπεὶ καὶ γὰρ τοὺς θεοὺς μαρτύρομαι ὡς οὐδὲν οὔτε προστέθεικα οὔτε ἀφείλον τῶν χρησθέντων νοημάτων, εἰ μὴ που λῆξιν ἡμαρτημένην διώρθωσα ἢ πρὸς τὸ σαφέστερον μεταβέβληκα ἢ τὸ μέτρον ἐλλείπον ἀνεπλήρωσα ἢ τι τῶν μὴ πρὸς τὴν πρόθεσιν συντεινόντων διέγραψα).

116 See above, pp. 339–40, with S. Mariev, "Scholarios' Account" (see above, n. 15).

117 On the Christian debate on apostolic deception in late antiquity, see K. Heyden, "Apostolic Hypocrisy: A Driving Force of Religious Co-production in Late Antique Christianity," in *Hypocrisy as a Co-Produced Concept in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, ed. K. Heyden and D. Nirenberg (Turnhout, forthcoming).

118 See especially B. D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture: The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament*, rev. ed. (New York, 2011).

119 On religious co-production, see K. Heyden and D. Nirenberg, "Co-produced Religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam," *HTR* (2024), forthcoming.

120 The eleven lacunae of the Roman family are as follows (only the last six passages, after the bar, are missing from T): 1.46.2–52, 54.2–55.1, 56.2–69.1, 73.2–75.2, 77.2–79.1, | 92.1–94.7, 96.2–99.3, 103.2–106.2, 131.3–177, 181.1–183, 199 (cf. Cantore, *Famiglia romana*, 3–7, and Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits*, 81–85; Cantore places this unknown editor's work before the tenth century). On the nature of the edition behind the Roman family—Cantore's β—see Cantore, *Famiglia romana*, and D. Bianconi, *Cura et studio: Il restauro del libro a Bisanzio* (Alessandria, 2018), 125–27. Raffaella Cantore is currently studying the motives behind this Christian rewriting, which apparently edits Herodotus to demonstrate the superiority of the Hebrew prophets.

been partially “improved” by comparison with a non-abridged version.¹²¹ The result was that T and its siblings contained the first five passages which were missing from the rest of the Roman family, whereas it lacked a further six which are found only in manuscripts of the Florentine family. If Pletho knew that his codex contained five passages missing in most other manuscripts—and was missing a further six present in yet others—he would have had all the more reason to suspect the integrity of the Herodotean codex he possessed. This was a text first bowdlerized by a Christian scribe and then unsystematically restored by another scholar seeking to undo the damage. But he was probably unaware of the issue—or at least of its gravity.¹²²

However Pletho explained his activities to himself, another question remains: How did he represent his editing to his friends and students? Did he actively lie about his textual modifications, for instance, by claiming that he had found the manuscript in its current state, or that he had copied the new readings into T as part of standard philological practice, that is, by comparing it with a more reliable manuscript? Did he misrepresent them by omission, keeping silent and hoping that his modifications would be taken as the work of the original scribe? Or did he openly tell some people that he had altered the text? One vision sits closer to modern notions of forgery—the other to some form of candid censorship.

The evidence pulls in both directions. On the material side, it is notable that Pletho was practiced at making his interventions in a particularly subtle way—when he wished. He was adept at adding new folia (sometimes with modified content),¹²³ and his habit of tracing over the ink throughout the codex, like his practice of deleting more letters than he wanted

to remove and then rewriting the “extra deletions” in larger format, makes his activities unusually hard to spot. Pletho’s more conventional practices, like restoring lost folia, have been successfully identified by paleographers through his unusually inelegant script. But his unconventional ones—rewriting theological content—are done in a more mimetic style and have often evaded paleographical detection. Is a coincidence that the folio on which Pletho rewrote Solon’s “blasphemous” words has suffered unusually bad water damage and hence “needed” to be particularly heavily traced over in Pletho’s black ink?

As for the historical and cultural evidence, Pletho’s remarks in Florence display a keen awareness of the “tells” that betray the inauthenticity of forged material. When it came to his own alterations, such evidence was everywhere. For one thing, all other manuscripts of Herodotus and Plato contained the original version that conflicted with his edited text. More seriously, Plutarch’s *On the Malignity of Herodotus*, written by an ancient Platonist, contained a direct citation of Solon’s speech to Croesus that drew attention to the “blasphemy” Pletho had removed. If Pletho knew that any serious scholar of antiquity could spot his text as inauthentic, surely he cannot have expected to get away with it.

But congruence with written evidence seems never to have been Pletho’s concern. The sweeping generalizations he made in the *Laws*—that every ancient sage held the same views as himself—were open to precisely the same critique, and, in this sense, were a mirror image of the Christian tradition of asserting that one’s every dogma is supported by “scripture,” irrespective of the textual reality. What is clear is that the history of philosophy presented in the *Laws* and the interventions in Pletho’s manuscripts are part of the same intellectual cosmos—one in which Solon never blasphemed, one in which the Persians endorsed a true theology, one in which Plato never wrote anything false, and one in which Homer did not tell unfitting stories about the gods. Pletho’s editorial interventions create a textual object that corresponds to that thought-world and, in a sense, provide it with evidentiary foundations.

The question of how Pletho talked about his editorial interventions thus connects to his broader openness with his closest circle about his philosophical views. The evidence here is fragmentary. We have already seen some of it: a decontextualized snippet of

121 This is the manuscript identified as Ω on my stemma, from which not only T but also Tr and Ve were copied. In Ellis, “*Recentiores*,” I discuss Bianconi’s suggestion (*Tessalonica*, 135, 181) that this work might go back to the circle of Triklines.

122 Pletho was clearly concerned with filling lacunae, but his only substantial textual restoration to T was to the lacuna in the fourth book (at 4.155.2–163.2). So it seems that, if he did conduct a careful comparison of T with another manuscript, he must have done so with a text of the Roman family, in comparison to which T looked like a complete and unabridged text.

123 For Pletho’s other restorations of folia, in addition to that in the text of Euclid, note the bifolium in Plutarch’s *Vitae Parallelae* in Monac. gr. 85, fols. 145–46, as discussed by Bianconi, *Cura*, 42, 127, n. 65, who notes that the text has many unparalleled readings.

text describing a “corrected” edition of Homer and various public and private statements from those who knew Pletho (especially Bessarion, Kabakes, Scholarios, and George of Trebizond), which contain fascinating hints but are hard to disentangle from the intellectual projects of their authors, often writing decades later with clear political agendas. The edited manuscript of Herodotus offers some new evidence by allowing us to see how scholars close to Pletho treated his editorial changes after his death when they made private decisions relating to the texts they collected for their personal libraries.

It seems likely that Pletho’s edited manuscript of Herodotus was copied so many times because Pletho and those who knew him thought it particularly valuable. The future cardinal Bessarion, like the historian Michael Kritoboulos, took the chance to copy Pletho’s Herodotus during the philosopher’s lifetime. In the latter half of the fifteenth century, in Rome, Pletho’s Herodotus seems to have been especially prized. Despite having already copied T himself in Mistra in 1436, Bessarion commissioned another more costly copy of the codex in 1469 (now in the final form in which Pletho had left it) and eventually bequeathed both copies (Be and Pl) to Venice. Presumably it was around this time that Bessarion or Plousiadenos copied Pletho’s later editorial interventions into the margins of Bessarion’s personal copy (made in 1436), bringing it up to date with the final state of Pletho’s text. When Kabakes created a new copy of the *Histories* in Rome in 1480, he, too, took Pletho’s manuscript as his exemplar.

Both Kabakes and Bessarion had ample opportunity to access other manuscripts of Herodotus in this period, so their focus on the Florentine manuscript seems to reflect a sense that the manuscript and its readings were important.¹²⁴ And both seem to have been aware that Pletho “improved” his codices. When, in the process of copying T, they encountered the gaping hole in Herodotus’s description of Persian religion at Hdt. 1.131.2, neither Bessarion nor Plousiadenos nor Kabakes left a space into which the missing text could be supplemented from another manuscript (see above, Fig. 2).

124 The length of Bessarion’s bibliophilic arm was prodigious. A good overview remains L. Labowsky, *Bessarion’s Library and the Biblioteca Marciana: Six Early Inventories* (Rome, 1979). For Kabakes’ use of the Vatican library in the summer of 1482 to borrow a copy of Strabo, see the library records discussed by D. Bianconi, “Itineraria Parmensia,” *Scripta* 14 (2021): 31–49, at 37–39.

Bessarion and Kabakes both compared their own copies of Pletho’s Herodotus with other manuscripts and made further philological corrections, filling in gaps in the text that had been there since the manuscript’s creation in 1318.¹²⁵ Kabakes, in particular, went over the text with a fine-tooth comb, inserting missing text and corrections into the margins of T and his own copy (Ka)—yet neither Bessarion nor Kabakes ever reversed any of the Plethonian changes we have seen by copying the original text back into the margins of T or of their own copies.

This looks like tacit acceptance of Pletho’s changes and it suggests confidence in the quality of Pletho’s work as editor. It also forms a marked contrast with the work of scholars unconnected to Pletho when they set about working on the text Pletho had produced.¹²⁶ If so, far from concealing the uniqueness of his codices from his students,¹²⁷ we should probably imagine Pletho sharing his distrust of manuscript testimony with his friends and impressing upon them the value of his “corrected” versions. The efforts of Bessarion and Kabakes to acquire, preserve, and copy Pletho’s codices in Rome suggest an interest in getting ahold of

125 Bessarion identified and supplemented the lacuna in Be at 4.155.2–63.2 (on fol. 66, described in the Appendix, under Tδ). Kabakes made supplements and corrections (on the basis of comparison with other manuscripts) on at least two occasions in books 3, 4, 5, 6, 9 (see the Appendix, under Tη).

126 The corrector of Na, for instance, has compared Pletho’s version with another manuscript and restored most of the original text of Hdt. 1.32.1 in the margin. The corrector of Π, likewise, restored the text erased by Pletho at 1.131.2, where it can be read today in Mo (see below, in the Appendix, under Tγ). It is worth contrasting Bessarion’s treatment of Pletho’s Herodotus with his much more active philological work on the text of Plato as transmitted in Marc. gr. Z. 189 (coll. 576) (Pletho’s censored codex), Marc. gr. Z. 186 (coll. 601) (Bessarion’s personal copy of Marc. gr. Z. 189, heavily corrected against other manuscripts), and Marc. gr. Z. 184 (coll. 326) (the extravagant full edition of Plato’s works copied, in part, from the corrected text of Marc. Z. 189). In the case of Plato, Bessarion *did* restore passages that Pletho had removed from the *Symposium*; see further Brockmann, *Überlieferung*, 134–35, fig. 35.

127 Cf. the different reconstruction offered by Pagani, “*Damnata verba*,” 198, who imagines Pletho working more covertly to harmonize his doctrinal claims with the historical record. This behavior might, Pagani suggests, have been particularly effective in Mistra—far from the rich libraries of Constantinople—where there were few alternative manuscripts that could contradict the version found in Pletho’s sanitized copies. But if, as suggested above, Pletho would have self-confidently declared the superiority of his own text, corrected from the corruptions of dishonest scribes, he would have been untroubled by other manuscripts whose text differed from his own.

the Plethonic “editions” of ancient texts.¹²⁸ Given the brilliance of Pletho’s philological conjectures and his remarkable feel for the Greek language, they had good reasons to do so. It seems clear that they knew that these texts had been in some way improved by Pletho.

In view of this, it may seem surprising that Bessarion, on whom Valla had hoped to lean for linguistic help during his translation of the Greek historians, seems not to have furnished Valla with Pletho’s version of Herodotus. He had, by contrast, given his personal copy of Aristotle to George of Trebizond and then to Theodore Gazes who were to translate it for him.¹²⁹ It is possible that Bessarion simply did not want to relinquish his personal manuscript of the Greek historians (Be) to Valla for a substantial period. Despite his active political life, we know that Bessarion read, annotated, and excerpted the writings of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon in Rome during the 1440s or 1450s, producing the notes that survive today in Marc. gr. Z. 526 (coll. 776) and at the same time inscribing a new layer of marginalia on his own codex of Herodotus (Be).¹³⁰ Be was a codex that Bessarion was probably using or planning to use when he put Valla up to the task of translation. But it is also possible that Bessarion knew that Pletho’s text was idiosyncratic and did not think it was the best basis for the Latin translation Valla was making. Given Bessarion’s studied disinterest in those aspects of his former teacher’s activity that could most obviously be attacked as heretical or pagan (and had the potential to be deeply compromising for someone pursuing a career in the Roman Curia), it is possible that Bessarion was adverse to putting the manuscript in the hands of a scholar who would compare it with others.¹³¹

128 For the circulation of a “Plato according to Pletho” in Mistra, see Pagani, “*Damnata verba*,” 195–99 (esp. 198).

129 For Alberti’s theory to the contrary, see above, n. 45. For Valla’s philological dependence on Bessarion, see Pagliaroli, *L’Erodoto*, 18, with n. 1. For Bessarion lending his Aristotle to the two successive translators, see Monfasani, *Vindicatio*, 14.

130 For the excerpts, the principles by which they were made, their source, and what can be surmised about their date (the watermark Briquet 2447 suggests some point in or after the period 1448–1466), see O. Mazzon, “Bessarione lettore di Erodoto, Tucide, Senofonte: Appunti sul ms. Venezia, BNM, gr. Z. 526 (coll. 776),” in *I libri di Bessarione: Studi sui manoscritti del Cardinale a Venezia e in Europa*, ed. A. Rigo and N. Zorzi (Turnhout, 2021), 307–26.

131 For Bessarion’s handling of Pletho’s intellectual legacy, see esp. Monfasani, “Cardinal Bessarion,” 13–17. Bessarion’s difficulties are reflected in the fact that he exerted himself to collect and copy Pletho’s

The evolution of Pletho’s neo-pagan beliefs is an obscure topic and one necessarily shrouded in darkness, given that the views Pletho developed could have led to his execution for heresy or apostasy.¹³² Pletho’s view of the philosophical and literary cosmos he forged is hard to reconstruct. Did he think that he was inventing a false past that his contemporary world needed? It seems more likely that he thought he had the insight required to reconstruct a deeper truth that had always existed. Either way, Pletho’s view of his own activities doubtless evolved over time, as different circumstances and conversations put it into a new light. We can look forward to Fabio Pagani’s forthcoming study on Pletho’s editorial activities, which should, for the first time, take account of a wide range of ancient texts known to have been edited by Pletho.



There is no doubt as to the identity of the late-medieval “editor” who made the alterations in the Florentine manuscript, T. The deletions have a date and an intellectual profile that fits Pletho precisely. His ideological deletion and rewriting show a concern to preserve a vision of intellectual history—a distinctively non-Christian *prisca theologia*—that is only attested in the surviving fragments of Pletho’s *Laws*. They are also paralleled by what we know of Pletho’s editing of the manuscripts of Plato and, perhaps, Homer. The more philological changes also look like Pletho’s work. First, they occur in a manuscript that Pletho is known to have owned, some appearing in the period before 1436, when Pletho was rewriting the text for ideological purposes, and others in the period between 1436 and his death, when Pletho was making philological improvements, including filling in a long lacuna in book 4.

Since the changes are mostly too minor to yield much to paleographical scrutiny, it cannot be excluded

manuscripts, annotate his autographs, and bequeath them to Venice—yet this bequest included not a single fragment of Pletho’s *Laws*, which were, at the same time, being assembled by Kabakes, a fellow pupil of Pletho within Bessarion’s circle in Rome. This does not, of course, exclude the possibility that Bessarion also collected these texts on his own account (or assisted Kabakes in doing so) but was simply careful not to consign them with the rest of his library to Venice.

132 For the case of Juvenal, whom Scholarios implies was an associate of Pletho and who was executed as a heretic in or around 1451, see Woodhouse, *Plethon*, 35.

that some of the smaller modifications were made by other readers or suggested to him by other scholars, whether his students or others who copied or examined his manuscript. But, as a whole, these interventions display the blend of erudition, intellectual engagement, and overconfidence characteristic of Pletho. They reveal his mastery of classical Greek morphology, syntax, and spelling (including his awareness of dialectical variation) and his habit of fixing garbled Greek by conjectural emendation inserted not as marginal variants but written directly into the text.¹³³

It is clear that at least some of Pletho's students and associates knew of his ideas and shared them in one form or another. It is thus worth emphasizing why Pletho is the only known scholar likely to be the author of the changes that appear in T between 1372 (the copying of Ko) and 1436 (the copying of Be). The aristocrat Demetrios Kabakes, Pletho's greatest admirer and later owner and annotator of T, is out of the question. Not only was he too young (barely 20) in 1436, he also lacked the knowledge of classical Greek to understand, let alone execute, most of the linguistic and syntactical rewritings.¹³⁴ Laonikos Chalkokondyles has sometimes been named as the "corrector" or "interpolator" of T on the basis of his subscription on its final page. Laonikos achieved much higher literacy than Kabakes and it seems likely that he studied with Pletho.¹³⁵ But he was a young child in 1436. Another possible source of some conjectures is Bessarion, already an accomplished scholar when he studied with Pletho and copied his

Herodotus (T) in Mistra. But no evidence has come to light that implicates Bessarion in his teacher's radical vision of the history of theology or in the bombastic editorial practices that can be linked with Pletho on the basis of other codices. If Bessarion played a role in Pletho's editing of Herodotus, it was probably that of the student watching the master at work.

Pletho's rewriting of Herodotus gives us one of a few secure dates in his intellectual biography. His interventions in the text of Herodotus are tied to his claims about Solon and the Magi and thus indicate that he had already formulated claims about the continuity of doctrine from Zoroaster to Plato to Iamblichus, in a form similar to that found in the *Laws*, by early 1436, at the very latest, and probably some time before.¹³⁶ It seems likely that his students and friends were aware not only of his philological deletions but also of his ideological changes to the text and avoided removing them.

Pletho's manuscript of Herodotus doubtless has many secrets left to reveal about Pletho's editorial practices and about the codex's journey from Mistra to Rome and Florence. But the examples from the first book of the *Histories*, discussed above, offer a new perspective on one of the most unusual scholars of medieval Greece. They show how this latter-day Plato combined prodigious linguistic skill and neo-pagan theology to produce a new vision of the past and create a new text of Herodotus that could serve the needs of the pagan Greek world whose coming he awaited.

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133 Contrast Pletho's comparatively weak mastery of classical meter and prosody, evaluated by Pontani, "L'Homère," 36.

134 Kabakes refers obliquely to his lack of a literary education—which often draws uncharitable remarks from modern scholars—in his *γνώμαι* at Vat. gr. 2185, fol. 33r–v, published by Bacchelli, "Di Demetrio" and "La *Considération*," with (respectively) Italian and French translations.

135 On Laonikos's Greek, see Kaldellis, *New Herodotus*, 19–20.

136 For contrary views, see above, n. 20.

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Appendix

Figure 1, a stemma of twenty-seven manuscripts of Herodotus's *Histories*, represents T (the manuscript edited by Pletho), T's siblings, and their descendants.¹³⁷ The stemma represents T's history diachronically, as a line that runs from the creation of the codex in 1318 (at the top) to the early sixteenth century (at the bottom). The lines leading off to each side indicate direct copies, and the lines branch off at the point at which they were copied (dates are precise when subscriptions allow, elsewhere estimated).

My findings are based on examination of books 1 and 4 and may not hold for other parts of the *Histories*.¹³⁸ I present the textual evidence for the reconstruction of this family in more detail elsewhere.¹³⁹ This appendix focuses on T and those manuscripts which can be identified as its direct copies, listed immediately below. The stemma offers a detailed picture of the textual evolution of T as its readers deleted, supplemented, and rewrote the text.

With the exception of T, I use two-letter sigla for all manuscripts cited, generally based on the name of the scribe (Bessarion, Kabakes, Michael Kritoboulos), where known, and after that either on the library or collection (Paris, Urbinatus) or on a description of the content or genre (Oracles, Extracts). The siglum t refers to a reading found in all manuscripts that I identify as direct copies of T (i.e., Am Ko Ha Be Mi Ex Pl Or Ka Da), except where other readings are listed for one or more of those manuscripts in the same entry. In the same way, the siglum Π refers to the consensus of Mo Ap, Ψ refers to the consensus of Pa Na Ox Va Do, and Ω refers to the consensus of Tr Ve Ab T. All other single-letter sigla (including T) are taken from

Wilson, *Herodoti Historiae* (i.e., the Oxford Classical Texts edition), and Rosén, *Herodoti Historiae* (i.e., the Teubner edition): A = Plut. gr. 70.3, C = conv. soppr. 207, D = Vat. gr. 2369, P = Par. gr. 1633, p = Par. gr. 1635, R = Vat. gr. 123; S = Cambridge, Emmanuel College, gr. 30, V = Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, philol. gr. 85, Ald = the Aldine edition of 1502. Minor spelling variants are given in brackets immediately *after* the relevant siglum.

When citing a reading for multiple manuscripts, I typically ignore trivial differences in accentuation and punctuation. I follow the majority of the manuscripts collated by not using the iota subscript and not using majuscules for proper names; I follow modern conventions in not transcribing the diaeresis over upsilon and iota. Reports of manuscripts I have not examined in person are placed between |vertical bars| and are based on the reports of Rosén, *Herodoti Historiae*, with occasional supplements from Cantore, *Famiglia romana*, and Wilson, *Herodoti Historiae*. Where these editors report no variants, I simply write “[rell.]” and where my report corrects another, I add [*sic*] after mine. Since the *recentiores* of Herodotus (with the exception of the Roman family) have not yet been examined in detail, further study may reveal some of these readings elsewhere in the tradition. I use superscript ^{ac} (*ante correctionem*) and ^{pc} (*post correctionem*) to distinguish the original reading from corrections (the latter include both those in the original hand and by later scribes). Where helpful, I insert underlining (never original) to make textual variants more visible.

Following the conventions of text-critical studies, I provide no Greek translations. The variants reported must be seen in the broader context of the Greek text that, for reasons of space, cannot be reproduced and translated here. The most significant rewritings of content are contextualized and translated in the article, along with some representative philological corrections.

T and Its Direct Copies

Indications of content are selective. Information on dates and scribes deduced from paleography,

137 From Hdt. 1.1 to 2.134 these manuscripts are part of the broader Roman family recently studied by Cantore, *Famiglia romana*, 6—the “numerosi altri *recentiores*, che non sono mai stati oggetto di attente e approfondite indagini.”

138 In addition to the many variants cited below, I have collated the following three passages (in all totaling sixteen chapters from books 1 and 4) in all manuscripts cited on the stemma: Hdt. 1.6.1–10.3, 1.65.1–69.1, 4.152.3–57.3.

139 See Ellis, “*Recentiores*,” where I provide fuller references to the bibliography on each manuscript, here kept to a minimum.

stemmatics, and background information is enclosed in square brackets; information not in square brackets is taken from scribal notes.

- T Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. gr. 70.6 (*Diktyon* 16571)
Digital reproduction available at <http://mss.bmlonline.it/s.aspx?Id=AWOIWMIrA4r7GxMMDB&c=Herodotus#/book>.
Herodotus, *Histories* 1–9, copied by Nikolaos Triklines in March 1318 (fol. 34ov), probably in Thessaloniki.¹⁴⁰
- Am Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana L 115 sup. (*Diktyon* 42974)
Herodotus, *Histories* 1.1–9.79.2. Although little has been established about the production context of this undated and unsigned manuscript (probably our earliest surviving copy of T), it seems that the codex was read by Guarino of Verona (1374–1460), who left some annotations in its later books.¹⁴¹
- Ko Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. grec 1634 (*Diktyon* 51257)
Digital reproduction available at <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b107233831/f5.item>.
Herodotus, *Histories* 1–9, copied at Astros, in the Peloponnese, in June 1372 by Konstantinos, priest and chartophylax in Pissa (fol. 48iv).¹⁴²
- Ha London, British Library, Harley 6312 (*Diktyon* 39705)
Digital reproduction formerly available at https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_6312.
Herodotus's *Histories* 1.1–96.1, copied before 1449 (the date of the possessor's note on fol. 6or).
- Be Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z. 365 (coll. 739) (*Diktyon* 69836)
Herodotus, *Histories* 1–9; Thucydides 1–7 (only); Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1–7; and extracts from Diogenes Laertius, completed by [Bessarion] on 30 May 1436 [in Mistra] (fol. 30ov);¹⁴³ Bessarion or a collaborator later copied some of Pletho's subsequent alterations to Plut. 70.6 into the margins of this manuscript.
- Mi Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. gr. 70.32 (*Diktyon* 16597)
Digital reproduction available at <http://mss.bmlonline.it/Catalogo.aspx?Shelfmark=Plut.70.32>.
Herodotus, *Histories* 1–9, copied by [Michael Kritoboulos] at some point [between 1436 and 1452/1454], probably in Mistra.¹⁴⁴
- Ex Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. gr. 2238 (*Diktyon* 68869)
Aristotle, *Poetics*, copied in Rome by Demetrios Raoul Kabakes in 1467 (fol. 155r). After the *Poetics*, Kabakes copied out excerpts from multiple authors including five brief extracts from Herodotus's *Histories* (on fol. 183v): 7.61.3, 62.1, 74.1, 8.44.2, 7.89.2.¹⁴⁵
- Or London, British Library, add. ms. 5424 (*Diktyon* 38778)
Digital reproduction formerly available at https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add_MS_5424.
Miscellany copied by [Demetrios Raoul Kabakes], including eight oracles from Herodotus (fol. 99r–v: 1.65.3, 66.2, 67.4, 85.2, 91.1, 6.77.2, 86.72, 7.140), followed by a selection of Pletho's works, including the *Summary of the*

140 For the place of T in Triklines' scribal productions and the Palaiologan Renaissance, as well as its paleographical features, see Bianconi, *Tessalonica*, 117, 123, 151, with further references.

141 Description and further references in Bértola, "Epigrams," 69–70. For Guarino's annotations, see A. Rollo, "Codici greci di Guarino Veronese, II: Erodoto," *Studi medievali umanistici* 2 (2004): 335–37, at 337, n. 2.

142 Description of the manuscript and transcription of the scribal note can be found in Bértola, "Epigrams," 67–69.

143 For identification of Bessarion's hand, see Mioni, "Bessarione," 269; for Bessarion's presence in Mistra from March to June 1436, see R. Loenertz, "Pour la biographie du cardinal Bessarion," *OCP* 10 (1944): 116–49, at 145–49.

144 For the identification of the hand of Kritoboulos (Μιχαὴλ Κριτόπουλος) in Mi, see Reinsch, *Critobuli*, 30*, 69*–70*.

145 See S. Lilla, *Codices Vaticani Graeci: Codices 2162–2254 (Codices Columnenses)* (Vatican City, 1985), 363–66. A. Colonna, "De Herodoti memoria," *BollClass* 1 (1945): 41–83, at 62–63, states, on the basis of collations of both manuscripts, that Ex is a copy of T.

*Doctrines of Zoroaster and Plato, Hymns, and fragments of the Laws.*¹⁴⁶

Pl Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z. 364 (coll. 718) (*Diktyon* 69835)
Herodotus, *Histories* 1–9; Thucydides 1–8;
Xenophon, *Hellenica* 1–7; copied in Rome
by John Plousiadenos for Bessarion in 1469
(fol. 381v).¹⁴⁷

Ka Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
Vat. gr. 1359 (*Diktyon* 67991)
Digital reproduction available in two parts at
https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1359.pt.1
and https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1359.pt.2.

Herodotus, *Histories* 1–9, copied by Demetrios
Kabakes in 1480 in Rome (fol. 486v).¹⁴⁸

Da Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele
III, III B 2 (*Diktyon* 46242)
Herodotus, *Histories* 1–9, copied by [Demetrios
Damilas] in the [late fifteenth or early sixteenth
century].¹⁴⁹

146 For the hand, see E. Gamillscheg and D. Harlfinger, *Repertorium der griechischen Kopisten 800–1600*, vol. 1, pt. A, *Verzeichnis der Kopisten* (Vienna, 1981), no. 95. The contents are listed in J. Nicolet and M. Tardieu, “Pletho arabicus: Identification et contenu du manuscrit arabe d’Istanbul, Topkapı Serâi, Ahmet III 1896,” *Journal Asiatique* 268 (1980): 35–57, at 45–48.

147 Colonna, “Herodoti memoria,” 52, assumed that this manuscript was copied in Crete, but E. Despotakis, *John Plousiadenos (1423?–1500): A Time-Space Geography of His Life and Career* (Leuven, 2020), 70–75, esp. 71, has shown that it was one of seven manuscripts that Plousiadenos copied for Bessarion at the latter’s Roman scriptorium between autumn 1468 and autumn 1470. See also Mioni, “Bessarione,” 301–2, and M. Manoussacas, “Recherches sur la vie de Jean Plousiadénos (Joseph de Méthone) (1429?–1500),” *REB* 17 (1959): 28–51. Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits*, 118–19, states that Pl is a copy of Be. Although Be was the model for Pl’s structure, and seems to have been consulted during the process (since a late Plethonian intervention in T is entered into the margin of Be at 1.72.1), Be is a direct copy of T in those passages I have collated.

148 For an introduction to the manuscript and further references, see now Bianconi, “L’Erodoto,” esp. 61–63, with n. 3, 73–74 (with analysis of Kabakes’ hand), with n. 44, and 76, n. 47 (with further references).

149 For catalogue description and further references, see M. R. Formentin, *Catalogus codicum graecorum Bibliothecae nationalis neapolitanae*, vol. 3 (Rome, 2015), 45–46.

Other Texts

Other texts related to T, of less value for the reconstruction of Pletho’s editing, but important for a systematic study of T’s history. Manuscripts are ordered by familial resemblance (see Fig. 1).

MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINTED EDITIONS DESCENDED IN PART OR IN FULL FROM Ψ

Pa Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. grec
2933 (*Diktyon* 52572)

Na Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele
III, III B 4 (*Diktyon* 46244)

Ox Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocci 114 (*Diktyon*
47401)

Va Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
Vat. pal. gr. 332 (*Diktyon* 66064)

Do Oxford, Bodleian Library, Barocci 200 (*Diktyon*
47488)

Ap Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. grec
1405 (*Diktyon* 51021)

Mo Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, gr. 221
(*α.Ο.4.2*), olim II. H. 6 (*Diktyon* 43335)

Ma Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Cent. V App. 10
(*Diktyon* 46671)

Ald *Herodoti libri novem quibus Musarum indita sunt nomina* (the Aldine edition, Venice, 1502)

OTHER INDIRECT DESCENDANTS OF T

Ch Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale Vittorio Emanuele
III, III B 1 (*Diktyon* 46241)

Ge Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
Vat. gr. 122 (*Diktyon* 66753)

Ur Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
Vat. Urb. gr. 88 (*Diktyon* 66555)

OTHER COPIES OF Ω AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

Tr Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, gr. 83 (*Diktyon* 55990)

Ve Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, gr. Z. 366
(coll. 0919) (*Diktyon* 69837)

Ab Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, A 253 inf. (*Diktyon*
42291)

OTHER RELATED MANUSCRIPTS

- La Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana,
Plut. gr. 70.29 (*Diktyon* 16594)
Fl Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. 28
(*Diktyon*, 17028)
Et Eton, College Library, ms. 113 (Bl.2.11) (*Diktyon*,
15566)

Τβ

Changes made between 1318 (creation of T) and 1372
(copying of Ko). Scribe(s) unknown.

1.65.3

ἡ ἀνθρωπον Tr Ve Ab Ch Ma^{ac} |rell.|
ἡ καὶ ἀνδρα T *in ras.* Ko Ha Ge Ψ Mo Ap
Ma^{v.l. & pc} Be Mi Pl Or Ka Da Ald
ἡ καὶ ἀνδρα Am Ur

2.14.2

ἐπεὰν δὲ καταπατήση τῆσιν ὑσὶ τὸ σπέρμα, ἀμη-
τον τὸ ἀπὸ τούτου μένει · ἀποδινήσας δὲ τῆσιν
ὑσὶ τὸν σίτον, οὕτω κομίζεται Ve, ἐπεὰν δὲ κατα-
πατήση τῆσιν ὑσὶ τὸν σίτον οὕτω κομίζεται T; a
version of the missing text (τὸ σπέρμα, τὸν ἀμη-
τον τὸ ἀπὸ τούτου μένει · ἀποδινήσας δὲ τῆσιν ὑσὶ)
has been added in black ink in the lower margin
of T;¹⁵⁰ this marginal addition is incorporated
in the main text in Ch Ur t and (with variants)
in Ψ and Mo.¹⁵¹

150 To judge from Rosén, *Herodoti Historiae*, 148, the reading τούδε is only found in T and its copies (though Rosén also reports T as reading τούτου). The reading ἀμητον in Ve is also found in [ABCP], while the reading τὸν ἀμητον added in the margin of T is found in [DJMSV] ([R] reads τὸ ἀμητον).

151 Pa reads ἀποδινίσας for ἀποδινήσας, Ox Va Do read τοῖσι(ν) ὑσὶ . . . τοῖσι(ν) ὑσὶ (for T's τῆσιν ὑσὶ . . . τῆσιν ὑσὶ), Mo reads τοῖσι ὑσὶ . . . τῆσιν ὑσὶ and καταπατηθῆ.

Τγ

Editing by Pletho between the copying of Ko (1372) and
the copying of Be (1436).

1.2.1

οὐκ ὡς ἔλληνες Tr Ve Ab Ch Ge Am Ur Ko Ha
Ma^{pc} |rell.|
οὐκ ὡς φοίνικες T *in ras.* Ψ Mo Ap Ma^{ac} Ald Be
Mi Pl Ka Da; om. Pa

1.32.1

ὦ κροῖσε ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐὼν φθο-
νερόν τε καὶ ταρχῶδες ἐπειρωτᾶς ἀνθρωπηίων
πραγμάτων πέρι Tr (: ἐπηρωτ-) Ve Ab Ch Ge Am
Ur Ko Ha Ma^{pc} Ald |rell.|
ὦ κροῖσε ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ ἀνθρώπινον πᾶν
οὐδαμᾶ ἐν τωτῷ μένον, ἐπειρωτᾶς τῶν σεωυτοῦ
πρηγμάτων πέρι T *in ras.* Be Mi Pl Ka Da
ὦ κροῖσε ἐπειρωτᾶς τῶν σεωυτοῦ πρηγμάτων περὶ
Pa Na (: ἐπηρωτᾶς) Ox Va
ὦ κροῖσε ἐπιστάμενόν με τὸ θεῖον πᾶν ἐὼν
φθονερόν τε καὶ ταρχῶδες, ἐπειρωτᾶς τῶν σεωυτοῦ
πραγμάτων πέρι Na^{pc} (in marg.) Mo Ap Ma^{ac}

1.32.6

ἄπειρος Tr Ve Ab Ch Ge Am Ur Ko Ha Da¹⁵²
Ψ Ald |rell.|
ἄπηρος T *in ras.* Be Mi Pl Ka Va^{pc} Ma
ἄπορος Pa

1.131.2

τὸν κύκλον πάντα τοῦ οὐρανοῦ δία καλέοντες
Ve Ab Ch Am Ur Ko Mo Ma Ald |rell.|¹⁵³
om. T *in ras.* Ψ Be Mi Pl Ka Da

152 The reading ἄπειρος in Da is unexpected and might reflect either the (very occasional) use of multiple sources by Damilas or the precise phonetic corruption that is implied by Pletho's conjecture.

153 As noted above, Mo's antigraph was a Ψ manuscript whose lacunae and other idiosyncrasies had been corrected against another manuscript. Since the "restored" text appears in Mo neatly in the first hand, it seems likely that the work of comparison and correction was done in Mo's antigraph (my Π).

1.196.1

ὁ μὲν, σοφώτατος· ὁ δὲ, κατὰ γνώμην τὴν ἡμετέρην
 Ve Ab Ch Ur Am Ko Ma Ald
 ὁ μὲν, σοφώτατος, κατὰ γνώμην τὴν ἡμετέρην
 T *in ras.*¹⁵⁴ Ψ Mo Be Mi Pl Ka Da
 ὁ μὲν σοφώτατος ὅδε κατὰ γνώμην τὴν ἡμετέρην
 |rell. |

1.207.5

κύρον γέ τὸν Καμβύσεω Ve Ab Pa^(γέ sup. lin.)
 Ma Ald |rell. |¹⁵⁵
 κύρόν τε τὸν καμβύσεω Ch Am Ur Ko
 κύρον τὸν Καμβύσεω T *in ras.* Na Mo Be Mi Pl
 Ka Da
 om. Ox Va Do (part of a brief lacuna: χωρίς τε
 <...> τῆς μάχης. νῦν ὦν)

1.216.1

τῶν φαρετρῶν ἀποκρεμάσας Ch Am Ur Ko¹⁵⁶
 τὸν φαρετρεῶνα ἀποκρεμάσας T^{Pc157} Ve Ab Ψ
 Mo Ma Be Mi Pl Ka Da |ABCP|

Tδ

Changes between 1436 and the copying of Mi.

1.9.1

σέο πειρόμενον Ch Ko Ha Be Pa |RV|; σέο
 πειρώμενον T *in ras.* Tr Ve Ab Am Ur Ψ (Ox:
 σέω) Mo Ma Mi Pl Ka Da, πειρώμενος |A^{ac}CP|

154 The last three letters of σοφώτατος have been erased—along with ὁ δὲ—and rewritten larger to fill the gap. Pletho's intervention aimed to solve a genuine problem in the text he read: that the original letters of ὅδε (this) had been accented and spaced to produce the syntactically incomprehensible ὁ δέ (he, on the other hand), superficially responding to the foregoing ὁ μὲν.

155 Rosén, *Herodoti Historiae*, 130, reports T's reading under the wrong siglum (his apparatus reads "γε] τε D¹ del. D²" and provides no report for T). But autopsy confirms that the reading in D is in fact that of the wider tradition: γε (without any subsequent alteration).

156 Rosén, *Herodoti Historiae*, 136, reports similar readings elsewhere as follows: τῶν φαρετρῶν |D|, τῶν φαρετρεῶν |JRT¹ SV|. In T, however, the penultimate epsilon of φαρετρεῶν is in a black ink clearly different from the original hand, a reading confirmed by its early copies.

157 In T, the omega and circumflex of the definite article have been erased and rewritten, and a loop has been added to the left-hand side of the noun's final omega, neatly forming an -εω- ligature, above which an alpha has been placed.

1.27.2

ἐς πέρσας Tr Ve Ab Ch Am Ur Ko Ha Ψ Mo
 Ma, ἐς σάρδεις T *in ras.* Mi Be *in ras.* Pl Ka Da
 |ACDRSV (P: σάρδεις)|, ἐς κροῖσον Mo^{γρ.} s.l.
 [sic] Ap Ald

1.57.1

οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως εἰπεῖν· χρεῶν ἐστὶ τεκμαιρόμενον
 λέγειν Tr Ve Ab T^{ac} Ch Am Ur Ko Ha (: χρεῶν
 δ' ἐστὶ) Ge (: χρεῶν δ' ἐστὶ) Ψ Π (: εἴπαι) Ald Be^{ac}
 οὐκ ἔχω ἀτρεκέως εἰπεῖν· εἰ δὲ χρεῶν ἐστὶ
 τεκμαιρόμενον λέγειν T^{Pc} (εἰ δὲ add. in marg.)
 Mi Be^{Pc} (εἰ δὲ add. s.l.) Pl Ka Da Ma¹⁵⁸

1.71.2

σάρδανις altered to ἄνδανις (see below, Tε)

4.155.2–63.2

ἐν Δελφοῖσι through ἡ δὲ Πυθίῃ οἱ χρᾶ τάδε: this text, originally covering two folia in T, had been lost from the manuscript by 1372. The resulting lacuna, found in most early copies, reads: ... ἀπό τε τοῦ χρηστηρίου τοῦ γενομένου [163v] <...> [166r] ἐπὶ μὲν τέσσαρας βάπτους. ... The missing text was restored to T in Pletho's own hand at some point between 1436 and his death.¹⁵⁹ In many other copies of T, the lacuna was also noticed and supplemented, but all copies made in or before 1436 supply the text from various other sources, as can be seen below. Kritoboulos's copy, made between mid-1436 and Pletho's death, is the first surviving copy of T to include the text of the bifolium copied by Pletho.

The variants listed appear in the following passage (4.155.2–3). Wilson's *Herodoti Historiae* prints the passage as follows (I underline the most important variants):

158 Rosén, *Herodoti Historiae*, 35, reports χρεῶν also for |P| and χρεόν for the rest of the tradition (i.e., |AcM|), though note that Mo [= Rosén's M] reads χρεών.

159 Hemmerdinger, *Les manuscrits*, 108, states, for reasons unclear to me, that the bifolium restored to T (fols. 164–65) was copied from the corresponding restoration in Be, a theory most recently explored by Bianconi, "L'Erodoto," 68–69. As the readings reported below reveal, the texts of these two supplements are so different that neither can have been the source of the other. Pletho and Bessarion independently filled the lacunae on the basis of two very different exemplars after they had parted company.

ἐν Δελφοῖσι αὐτῷ καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τιμῆς τὴν ἔσχε
τὴν ἐπωνυμίην ποιούμενος· Λίβυες γὰρ βασιλέα
βάττον καλέουσι, καὶ τούτου εἵνεκα δοκέω
θεσπίζουσιν τὴν Πυθίην καλέσαι μιν Λιβυκῇ
γλώσσῃ· εἰδυῖαν ὡς βασιλεὺς ἔσται ἐν Λιβύῃ.
ἐπεῖτε γὰρ ἡνδρώθη οὗτος, ἦλθε ἐς Δελφούς
περὶ τῆς φωνῆς· ἐπειρωτῶντι δὲ οἱ χρᾶ ἡ Πυθίη
τάδε· Βάττ', ἐπὶ φωνὴν ἦλθες. ἀναξ δέ σε
Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων ἐς Λιβύην πέμπει μηλοτρόφον
οἰκιστῆρα

[τὴν ἔσχε |d|, τὴνδ' ἔσχε |ABC|, ἦν |Mo p
Ald|]

Ko (first hand) omits the text; the
supplement (in a later hand) reads

τὴνδε ἔσχε . . . βασιλέα βάττον . . . τὴν
πυθίην καλέσαι . . . λιβυκῇ γλώσσῃ
εἰδυῖαν . . .

Am omits the text; no attempt has been
made to fill the lacuna.

Be initially lacked the text; the supplement
(on a smaller folio added later) reads

ἦν ἔσχε . . . βασιλέα βάττον . . . τὴν
λιβυήν¹⁶⁰ καλέσαι . . . λιβυκῇ γλώσσῃ·
εἰδυῖαν . . .

T: Pletho's textual supplement (on the
bifolium) reads

ἦν ἔσχε . . . βάττον βασιλέα . . . τὴν ἱρηίνην,
καλέσαι . . . λιβυκῇ γλώσσῃ βάττον.
εἰδυῖαν . . .

Mi (first hand):

ἦν ἔσχε . . . βάττον βασιλέα . . . τὴν ἱρηίνην,
καλέσαι . . . λιβυκῇ φωνῇ βάττον.
εἰδυῖαν . . . (γλώσσῃ *in marg.* as a
variant/correction of φωνῇ)

Pl (first hand):

ἦν ἔσχε . . . βάττον βασιλέα . . . τὴν ἱρηίνην,
καλέσαι . . . λιβυκῇ γλώσσῃ βάττον.
εἰδυῖαν . . .

Ka (first hand):

ἦν ἔσχε . . . βάττον βασιλέα . . . τὴν ἱρηίνην,
καλέσαι . . . λιβυκῇ γλώσσῃ βάττον,
εἰδυῖαν . . .

160 This odd error (caused by confusion with the word λιβυκῇ just after) is a clue as to the source Bessarion used, since it is also found in several other manuscripts, including Ambros. C 82 sup., Paris gr. 1633, and Paris gr. 1635.

Da (first hand):

ἦν ἔσχε . . . βάττον βασιλέα . . . τὴν ἱρηίνην
καλέσαι . . . λιβυκῇ γλώσσῃ βάττον,
εἰδυῖαν . . .

Physical Description of the Bifolium Text in the Codd. of the T Family

Ko

T seems to have already lost its bifolium in 1472, since Konstantinos's copy also lacked this text. A later hand has stuck a piece of paper on top of the lower part of fol. 235v, interrupting Konstantinos's text precisely where the lacuna must have begun (i.e., after ἀπὸ τε τοῦ χρηστηρίου τοῦ γενομένου), and supplied the missing text on this new piece of paper and two new folia (fols. 236 and 237). The text on 237v continues past the end of the lacuna in T so as to dovetail with the next page of Konstantinos's original text (now fol. 238r), which begins at 4.163.3 with ἐς τὸ ἀμφίρρυτον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἀποθανέαι. In order to finish the page neatly, the later scribe has continued writing text to the end of the page, resulting in the repetition of the first six-and-a-half words after the lacuna (ἐς τὸν ἀμφίρρυτον· εἰ δὲ μή, ἀπο-). The new text differs substantially from that added to T by Pletho.

Am

The manuscript entirely omits 4.155.2–63.2 (the text, on fol. 160r, runs ἀπὸ τοῦ χρηστηρίου τοῦ γενομένου : ἐπὶ μὲν τέσσαρας). No attempt has been made to fill the lacuna from other sources.

Be

Bessarion's copy has a lacuna from 4.155.2–63.2. The missing text is supplied in Bessarion's hand (in ink of a different color) on a small folio (fol. 66) that is bound immediately in front of the folio containing the omission (67r), with a *signe de renvoi* (a conical sun symbol) to indicate where the text belongs. The new text differs significantly from that added to T by Pletho. Bessarion's collection of extracts from the Greek historians (Ro) contains several excerpts from 4.155.2–63.2, suggesting that Bessarion added the supplementary folio to

Be *before* reading the Greek historians and creating Ro (at an unknown point in the 1440s or 1450s).¹⁶¹

T (Pletho's hand)

The lacuna has been filled by a bifolium (now fols. 164r–65v) in a hand identified as Pletho's by Bianconi. The addition can be dated to the period between 1436 and Pletho's death in the early 1450s. The two new folia have been calculated to dovetail perfectly with the rest of the manuscript, as penned by Triklines, without any repetition of words or alteration of letter size or spacing. The text of T has a number of variants that are not found in the *apparatus critici* of modern editions of Herodotus.

Mi

The text of Hdt. 4.155.2–63.2 is written in the hand of Michael Kritoboulos, the main scribe, without interruption or later addition, on fols. 158r–59v. In the collated passage the text agrees with that of Pletho's bifolium in T today with one exception: φωνῇ has been substituted for γλώσση (the reading given by all manuscripts I have examined). The latter has, however, been copied into the margin as a variant with a small *signe de renvoi*. It seems most likely that Kritoboulos had Pletho's bifolium in front of him and mentally substituted one word with a synonym, then corrected his error.

Pl

The text of Hdt. 4.155.2–63.2 is written in the hand of the first scribe, John Plousiadenos, without interruption or later addition, on fols. 83r–84r. In the collated passage the text agrees with that of the bifolium in T today in Pletho's hand.

Ka

The text of Hdt. 4.155.2–63.2 is written in the hand of the first scribe, Kabakes, without interruption or later addition, on fols. 221r–23v. In the collated passage the text agrees with that of the bifolium in T today in Pletho's hand.

Da

The text of Hdt. 4.155.2–63.2 is written in the hand of the first scribe, Damilas, without interruption or later addition, on fols. 157r–59r. In the collated passage the text agrees with that of the bifolium in T today in Pletho's hand.

T ε

Changes made between the copying of Mi and Pletho's death.

1.71.2

σάνδανις . . . στρατεύεσθαι παρασκεύαζαι Ge Pa Na
Ma Ald |ABCPRSV|

σάρδανις . . . στρατεύεσθαι παρασκευάζαι Ve Ab
Ch Am Ur Ko Ha Be Ro¹⁶²

ἄνδανις . . . στρατεύεσθαι παρασκευάζαι Mi
ἐλδανις T *in ras.* (the last deletion rendered part
of the next line, below σάρδανις, illegible)

ἐλδανις . . . στρατεύε.....σκευάζαι
(Plousiadenos and Damilas leave a space for the
illegible text) Pl Da (: ἐλδ-)

ἐλδανις . . . στρατεύει καὶ παρασκευάζαι Ka
(Kabakes attempted to fill the space)

σάνδανης . . . στρατεύεσθαι παρασκευάζεται Ox
σάνδανης . . . στρατεύεσθαι παρασκευάζει.αι (clear
erasure of an original -τ-) Va Do

σάνδανις . . . παρασκευάζει στρατεύεσθαι
Mo Ap

1.196.3

. . . καὶ οὕτως αἱ εὐμορφοὶ τὰς ἀμόρφους καὶ
ἐμπήρους ἐξεδίδονσαν· ἐκδούναι δὲ τὴν ἐωυτοῦ
θυγατέρα ὅτεω βούλοιοτο ἕκαστος, οὐκ ἐξήν· οὐδὲ

161 See Ro, fol. 17r, l.22 (= 4.155.4), l.23 (= 4.156.2), l.25 (= 4.157.2). While I found no readings in Ro that are unique to fol. 66 of Be, the general agreement of the two texts and the fact that Ro was demonstrably copied from Be suggests that Be, fol. 66, was the source of these extracts. Bessarion may conceivably have noticed and repaired the lacuna as part of the reading of Herodotus during which he created the notes in Ro.

162 As noted above, a later hand, resembling that of John Plousiadenos, has written ἐλδανις in the margin of Be (see above, Fig. 8). In Bessarion's own extracts of Herodotus, by contrast, apparently copied from Be in Italy in the 1440s or 1450s, we find only the original reading of T and Be: σάρδανις (Ro, fol. 6r, l.26).

ἄνευ ἐγγυητέω ἀπάγεσθαι τὴν παρθένον πριάμενον
· ἄλλ' ἐγγυητὰς χρῆν καταστήσαντα, ἢ μὲν
συννοικήσειν αὐτῇ, οὕτω ἂν ἄγεσθαι Ve Ab Ma
(Ma: ἐμπίρους . . . ἀπα^γγέσθαι)

ἐκδοῦναι δὲ τὴν ἑωυτοῦ θυγατέρα] om. T Ch Ur
t Ψ Mo

οὐκ ἐξῆν οὐδὲ ἄνευ . . . ἄλλ' ἐγγυητὰς χρῆν Ch Ur
Ko Am

οὐκ ἐξῆν δὲ ἄνευ . . . ἄλλ' ἐγγυητὰς χρῆν Ψ
Be^{ac} Mi

οὐκ ἐξῆν · ὁ δὲ ἄνευ . . . ἄλλ' ἐγγυητὰς χρῆν T *in*
ras. (the first two letters of οὐδὲ are deleted and
replaced with a mid-point and an omicron, while a
nu is placed to the top right of χρῆν, in each case in
black ink), Be^{pc} (ὁ added above the line) Pl Ka Da

Τζ

A later reader, recently identified by Bianconi as Kabakes, has added alternating sun and moon symbols in the margin throughout the entire codex (before 1469).¹⁶³

Τη

Textual corrections and supplements by Kabakes (ca. 1480).

The supplements at 5.79.2, 9.13.3, 15.4, 17.1, 71.1 (made before or during the copying of Ka) have recently been described in detail by Bianconi.¹⁶⁴

Supplements to the six *Lacunae* in books 3, 4, and 6 (made during or after the copying of Ka) comprise the following:¹⁶⁵

163 For the purpose of these symbols, a concordance of their appearance in T and Ka, and their ascription to Kabakes, see Bianconi, “L’Erodoto,” 69–71, 82–84. The presence of these same symbols in the first nine folia of Pl indicates that this series of annotations had at least been begun by 1469.

164 Bianconi, “L’Erodoto,” 78–79, notes that these corrections appear in the margins of T but are adopted as the main text of Ka and hence must antedate the copying of Ka, even if they were made as a preliminary step to the latter’s creation. Bianconi also plausibly identifies a marginal note on fol. 303v, at 8.108.2 (ἔρα · εὐρυβιάδεο ἀβουλῆν), as subsequent to the copying of Ka, because it is found only in T.

165 Bianconi, “L’Erodoto,” 71–77, provides a transcription of these supplements, which are found in the margins of both T and Ka and were thus added after the copying of Ka in 1480, like the correction

3.124.2

Text of a lacuna in T has been copied into the margin by Kabakes (marginal text: ἦδε . . . παρθενεύεσθαι)

3.134.4–5

Text of a lacuna in T has been copied into the margin by Kabakes (marginal text: καὶ . . . στρατεύεσθαι)

4.33.2–3

Text of a lacuna in T has been copied into the margin by Kabakes (marginal text: τοὺς κομίζαντας . . . εἶναι)

4.34.1–2

Text of a lacuna in T has been copied into the margin by Kabakes (marginal text: αἱ μὲν . . . οἱ ἐλαίη)

4.81.5–6

Text of a lacuna in T has been copied into the margin by Kabakes (marginal text: τῶν Σκυθέων . . . πλήθους, τῶν)

6.122

Text of a lacuna in T has been copied into the margin by Kabakes (marginal text: Καλλιέω δὲ . . . τῷ ἀνδρὶ)

at 4.57.4. Bianconi identifies the source of the supplementary text as close to the Roman family (specifically RXSVD). Note that Kabakes’ philological improvements to Ka in this phase of correction are more extensive than those he made to T. The text of the six lacunae noted above (up to and including 6.122) is added into the margins of both T and Ka. But the text of at least two further lacunae in Triklines’ hand (7.171.1 [missing text: τελευτήσαντα . . . μενέλεω] and 9.68 [missing text: δηλοῖ τέ μοι . . . πολέμοισι ἐφευγον]) is added into the margins of Ka (respectively on fols. 373v and 467r) but is not added to T (where they would appear on fols. 269r and 328v [the latter lacuna is also noted by Bianconi, “L’Erodoto,” 76–77]). While it is not impossible that Kabakes was simply unsystematic or distracted (so Bianconi, “L’Erodoto,” 77), a likely scenario is that he began correcting T and Ka against a third manuscript of Herodotus in 1480, soon after completing his own copy (as Bianconi, “L’Erodoto,” 76 notes, the ink used in the correction of Ka is different from that used for the main text), but by book 6 or 7 had ceased adding his corrections into T because it was no longer in his possession.